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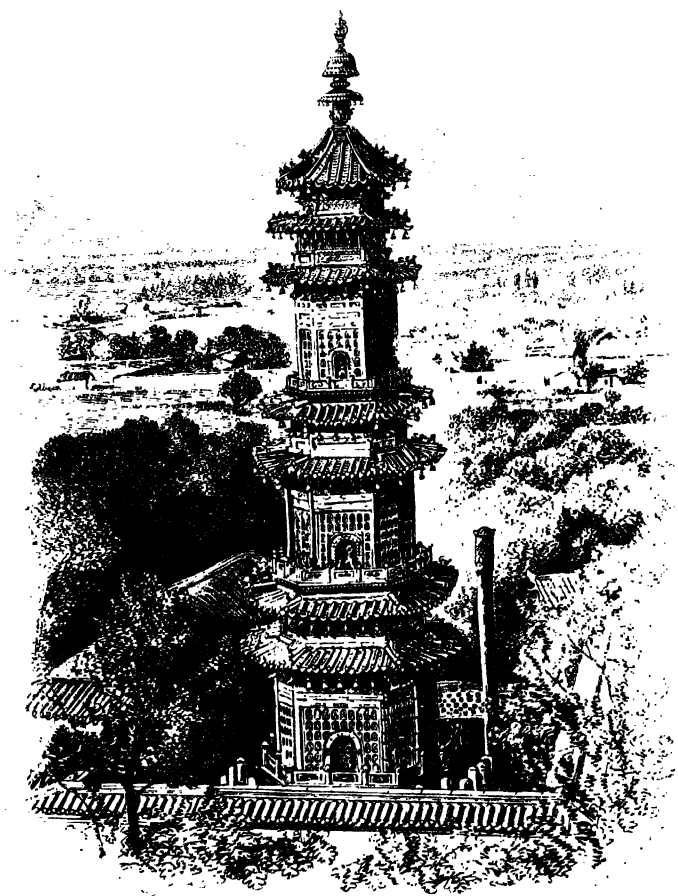


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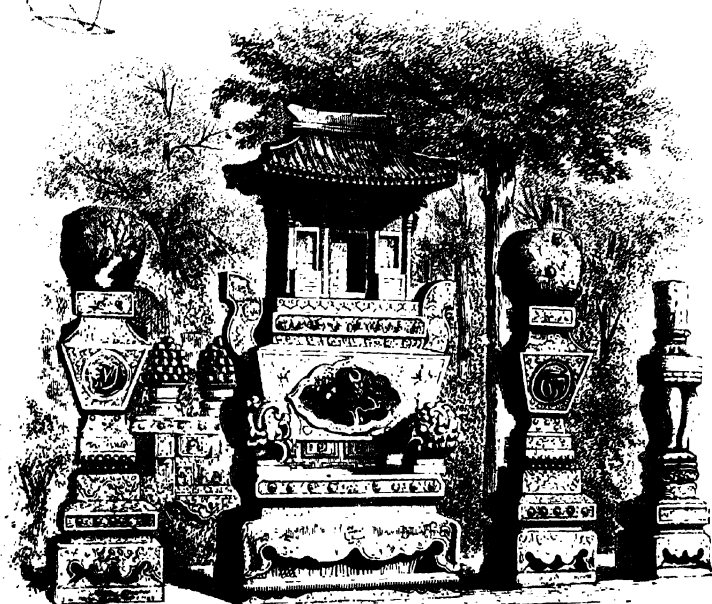
(Frontispiece.)

PAGODA AND GARDENS OF THE EMPEROR'S SUMMER PALACE,  
LUEN-MIN-YUEN.

THE  
SIBERIAN OVERLAND ROUTE

FROM PEKING TO PETERSBURG,  
THROUGH THE DESERTS AND STEPPES OF MONGOLIA,  
TARTARY, &c.

BY ALEXANDER MICHIE.



TOMB AT THE DEPOT, PEKING.

LONDON :  
JOHN MURRAY ALBEMARLE STREET.  
1864.



## PREFACE.

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THE following work has but moderate claims, I fear, to public attention ; and it would probably not have seen the light at all but for the urgent request of friends, who think better of it than the author does. It has no pretensions to any higher merit than that of being a plain narrative of the journey, and an impartial record of my own impressions of the people among whom I travelled.

Although some portions of the route have been eloquently described by Huc and others, I am not aware that any continuous account of the whole journey between the capitals of China and Russia has appeared in the English language for nearly a century and a half. Important changes have occurred in that period ; and, if I may judge of others by myself, I suspect that many erroneous notions are afloat respecting the conditions of life in these far-off regions, and more especially in Siberia. Observation has modified my own pre-conceived opinions on many of the subjects touched on in the following pages, and I am not without a hope that they will be found to contain some information which may be new to many people in this country.

If I have indulged in irrelevant digressions, I can only say that I have limited myself to those reflections which naturally suggested themselves in the course of my travels; and the subjects I have given most prominence to are simply those which happened to be the most interesting to myself.

My thanks are due to various friends for useful hints, confirming and correcting my own observations; but I am especially indebted for some valuable notes on Siberia, its social phenomena, gold mines, &c., to Edwin E. Bishop, Esq., whose long residence in the country, and perfect acquaintance with the language and customs of the people, constitute him an authority on all matters connected with that part of the world.

22, BERKELEY SQUARE,  
*October 28th, 1864.*

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Mr. Michie made no comment.





THE  
SIBERIAN OVERLAND ROUTE FROM  
PEKING TO PETERSBURG.

CHAPTER I.

SHANGHAE TO TIENTSIN.

THE charming narrative of John Bell, of Anternony, who, in the reign of Peter the Great, travelled from Petersburg to Peking in the suite of a Russian ambassador, inspired me with a longing desire to visit Siberia and other little-known regions through which he passed. Having occasion to return to England, after a somewhat protracted residence on the coast of China, an opportunity presented itself of travelling through the north of China, Mongolia, and Siberia, on my homeward journey. This is, indeed, the real "overland route" from China, and it may as properly be styled "maritime," as the mail route per P. & O. steamers "overland." The so-called overland route has, however, strong temptations for a person eager to get home. There is a pleasing simplicity about the manner of it which is a powerful attraction to one who is worn out with sleepless nights in a hot climate. It is but to embark on a steamer; attend as regularly at meal times as your constitution will permit; sleep, or

what is the same thing, read, during the intervals; and fill up the blanks by counting the passing hours and surveying your fellow passengers steeped in apoplectic slumbers under the enervating influence of the tropics. The sea route has, moreover, a decided advantage in point of time. In forty-five or fifty days I could have reached England from Shanghai by steamer: the land journey *viâ* Siberia I could not hope to accomplish in less than ninety days.

But the northern route had strong attractions for me in the kind of vague mystery that invests the geography of strange countries, and the character, manners, and customs of their inhabitants. Ever-recurring novelties might be expected to keep the mind alive; and active travelling would in a great measure relieve the tedium of a long and arduous journey. Of the two, therefore, I preferred the prospect of being frozen in Siberia to being stewed in the Red Sea. The heat of Shanghai in the summer was intense and almost unprecedented, the supply of ice was fast undergoing dissolution, and an escape into colder regions at such a time was more than usually desirable.

A few years ago it would have been about as feasible to travel from China to England by way of the moon as through Peking and Mongolia. Peking was a sealed book, jealously guarded by an arrogant, because an ignorant, government. Little was known of the city of the khans except what the Jesuits had communicated in the last century, and what that prince of travellers, Marco Polo, had handed down from the middle ages. No foreigner dared show his face there, except in the guise of a native, and even then at the risk of being detected and subjected to the greatest indignities. The Jesuits, it is true, in the face of the prohibition, continued to smuggle themselves into China, and even into Peking itself, and their perseverance and tenacity of purpose are entitled to all praise. But they

occasionally paid dearly for their temerity, and not unfrequently got themselves and their "Christians" into hot water with the authorities. This received the high-sounding name of "persecution;" and if any one lost his life for meddling in other people's affairs, or interfering with the prerogative of the government, he was honoured with the name of a "martyr." The Jesuits had their day of power in China, and if they had but used it modestly they might still have stood at the elbow of the Emperor. They were tried and found wanting, expelled from Peking, and China was closed against foreigners, not, it must be confessed, without some reason.

All that has been changed again. The curtain has risen once more; foreigners are free to traverse the length and breadth of China, and to spy out the nakedness of the land. The treaty of Tientsin and convention of Peking, ratified in November, 1860, which opened up China to travellers for "business or pleasure," was largely taken advantage of in the following year. In 1861, foreign steamers penetrated by the great river Yang-tsze into the heart of China. Four enterprising foreigners explored the river to a distance of 1800 miles from the sea, and many other excursions were set on foot by foreigners, in regions previously known only through the accounts of Chinese geographers or the partial, imperfect, and in some instances obsolete, descriptions of the older Jesuits.

Mongolia, being within the dominions of the Emperor of China, was included in the passport system; and although the Chinese government has made a feeble attempt to impose restrictions on foreign travellers in that region on the ground that, although Chinese, it is not China, up to the present time no serious obstacles have been placed in the way of free intercourse in Mongolia; nor can the plain language of the treaty be limited in its interpretation, unless

the ministers of the treaty powers should voluntarily abandon the privilege now enjoyed. It is devoutly to be hoped that no envoy of Great Britain will again commit the error of waiving rights once granted by the Chinese. However unimportant such abandoned rights may appear, experience has shown that the results are not so. Sir Michael Seymour's war at Canton in 1856-7 could never have occurred if our undoubted right to reside in that city had been insisted on some years previously. Our disaster at the Taku forts in 1859 would have been prevented if the right of our minister to reside in Peking had not, in a weak moment, been waived. What complications have not arisen in Japan, from our consenting to undo half Lord Elgin's treaty and allowing the port of Osaca to remain closed to our merchantmen ! We cannot afford to make concessions to Asiatic powers. Give them an inch and they will take an ell : then fleets and armies must be brought into play to recover ground we have lost through sheer wantonness.

Too late to join a party who preceded me, I had some difficulty in finding a companion for the journey, but had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of a young gentleman from Lyons, who purposed going to France by the Siberian route with or without a companion. We at once arranged matters to our mutual satisfaction, and proceeded with the preparations necessary for the journey. Having the advantage of excellent practical advice on this head from gentlemen who had already gone over the ground, we had little difficulty in getting up our outfit. A tent was indispensable for Mongolia, and we got a very commodious one from a French officer. A military cork mattress, with waterproof sheets, proved invaluable in the desert. Our clothing department was inconveniently bulky, because we had to provide both for very hot and very cold weather. The commissariat was liberally supplied, rather overdone, as



it turned out, but that was a fault on the safe side. The accounts we heard of the "hungry desert," where nothing grows but mutton, induced us to lay in supplies not only for an ordinary journey across, but for any unforeseen delay we might encounter on the way.

We had first to get to Tientsin, six hundred miles from Shanghai, and two steamers were under despatch for that port. I embarked on board the *Nanxing*, Captain Morrison, about midnight on the 28th July, 1863. Taking advantage of the bright moon, we steamed cautiously down the river Wong-poo for fourteen miles, past the village of Woon-sung, "outside the marks," and into the great river Yang-tsze, where we cast anchor for the night. It would be hazardous to attempt the navigation of the estuary of the Yang-tsze, even in bright moonlight. Its banks are so flat as to afford no marks to steer by. The estuary is very wide, but the deep water channel is narrow, with extensive shallows on either side. The upper parts of the Yang-tsze-kiang, where the river narrows to a mile or two in breadth, and flows through a bolder country, are more easy of navigation. In the broad part of the river, near its mouth, the deep water channels have a tendency to shift their positions. The surveys of the river from its mouth to Nanking, made in 1842, were found inapplicable in 1861. Where shallows were marked in 1842, deep water was found in 1861, and dry patches were found where the navigable channels were before. The delta of this noble river is rapidly growing into dry land; the "banks" are fast rising into islands, and the channels of the river becoming more circumscribed. The rapidity with which this process is going on is most remarkable. From a point nearly fifty miles from the mouth of the river it is divided into two great branches, called by hydrographers the north and the south entrances. Twenty years ago extensive shallows lay between, and many a good ship

found a final resting-place on these treacherous banks. The most dangerous of these are now above water, and are visible from a distance sufficient to enable the pilot to keep clear of them. In the small river Wang-poo also, at and below the town of Shanghai, the land is gaining considerably on the water. An island has formed and is still growing near the mouth of the Wang-poo, known to pilots as the "middle-ground." Until a very few years ago it was entirely under water. In the year 1855 I was aground on the top of it in a schooner near low water, and the rising tide floated us off easily. The island is now so high as to remain uncovered in the highest spring tides. Thus, in the space of eight years, this island has risen more than twelve, and probably not less than eighteen feet. The formation is extending itself downwards; the tail of the island stretching away under water brought up many vessels in 1862 and 1863, where there was plenty of water a year or two before. On the south shore of the Yang-tsze-kiang the lines of embankment mark the different stages of the aggression of the land on the water. When a dry flat was formed liable to inundations in high tides, an embankment of mud was built for the protection of the inhabitants who settled on the reclaimed land. In process of time more land was made, and another embankment formed. Thus three distinct lines of embankment, several miles inland from the present water line, are to be traced from below Woosung towards Hang-chow Bay, and a very large tract of good arable land has been reclaimed from the river, or, as the Chinese call it, the sea, within comparatively modern times. From the causes we see now in active operation, it is easy to trace the formation of the vast alluvial plain which now supports so many millions of inhabitants.

There are, indeed, intimations in the Chinese records of some of these changes. Islands in the sea are mentioned but a few centuries back, which are now hills in inhabited

districts. In the dawn of Chinese history allusions are made to a great flood which desolated the land, and the Emperor Yaou has been immortalised for his achievements in subduing and regulating the waters. Yaou reigned about 2200 B.C., and the rising of the waters in his time has been referred by some to the Noachian deluge. But the Chinese empire at that time extended as far south as the Great River, and included three great valleys. It is not an improbable conjecture therefore that there was a large circumference of debateable land barely reclaimed from the sea. With the imperfect means then at command for keeping out the water it is easy to suppose that an unusually high tide would break down the defences and overflow the flat country. It may also be, of course, that then, as now, the Yellow River caused trouble by arbitrarily changing its course, and the patriotic labours of Yaou may have been limited to damming up that wayward stream, which has been called "China's sorrow." But the chronicles of the great inundation do not appear to have been satisfactorily explained, and it may be said of the annals of the reigns of Yaou and Shun, that the interest which attaches to them is in direct proportion to their obscurity.

A few hours' steaming on the 29th took us out of the turbid waters of the Yang-tsze-kiang, but during the whole of that day we continued in shallow water of a very light sea-green colour. The weather was fine, and though still extremely hot, the fresh sea air soon produced a magical effect on our enfeebled digestion. The voyage was as pleasant as a good ship, a good table, and a courteous commander could make it. On the 30th a thick fog settled down on the water, and on the following morning all eyes were anxiously straining after the Shantung promontory, which was the turning-point of our voyage. By dead reckoning we were close to it, but there is no accounting for the effect of the currents that sweep round this bold headland. The tide rushes into the

Gulf of Pecheli by one side of the entrance, and out at the other. But from the conformation of the gulf the tidal currents are subject to disturbances from various causes, of which the direction of the wind is the most potent. A north-westerly wind keeps the tide wave at bay, and drives the water out of the gulf, until its level has been lowered several feet below that of the ocean. Great irregularities in the ebb and flow are occasioned by this; and when the cause ceases to act, the reaction is proportionate to the amount of disturbance; the pent-up waters from without flow in with impetuosity, and the equilibrium is restored.

In the dense fog, our commander could only crawl along cautiously, stopping now and again to listen for the sound of men's voices, or the barking of dogs, take soundings, and watch for any indications of the near vicinity of land. At length, to our great joy, the fog lifted over a recognisable point of the promontory, and immediately settled down again. The glimpse was sufficient however, and the good steamer was at once headed westward, for the mouth of the Peiho river, and bowled along fearlessly on her way. As the sun rose higher the mist was dispersed, and the bold rugged outline of the Shantung coast was unveiled before us. The clear blue water was alive with Chinese coasting craft, small and large, of most picturesque appearance. The heavy, unwieldy junks of northern China lay almost motionless, their wide-spread sails hanging idly to the mast, for there was just wind enough to ripple the surface of the water in long patches, leaving large spaces of glassy smoothness untouched by the breeze.

The crews of the northern junks are hardy stalwart fellows, inured to labour, and zealous in their work. Their vessels are built very low-sided, to enable them to be propelled by oars when the wind fails them. The crews work cheerily at their oars, both night and day, when necessary,

keeping time to the tune of their half-joyous, half-melancholy boat-songs. With all their exertions, however, they drive the shapeless lump but slowly through the water, and one cannot help feeling pity for the poor men, and regret for the waste of so much manual labour. It is to be hoped that this hardy race of seamen will find more fruitful fields wherein to turn their strength to account when foreign vessels and steamers have superseded the time-honoured but extravagant system of navigation in China. This end has, indeed, been already reached to a certain extent. China has been imbued with the progressive spirit of the world, to the great advantage both of themselves and foreigners. The southern coasts swarm with steamers, and the Gulf of Pecheli, in this the third year from the opening of foreign trade in the north, was regularly visited by trading steamers. In all discussions in England on the subject of the development of trade in China, the vast coasting trade is generally overlooked, as a matter in which we have no interest. This is a mistake, however, for foreigners have a considerable share in that trade directly, and their steamers and sailing vessels are employed to a very large extent by the Chinese merchants. All produce is very materially reduced in price to the consumer by the facilities for competition among merchants which improved communication affords, and by the diminution in expenses of carriage, which is the necessary result. The rapidity with which foreign vessels can accomplish their voyages as compared with Chinese junks enables the native trader to make so many more ventures in a given time, that he can afford to take smaller profits than formerly, and yet on the average be no loser. Or even if the average results of the year's trade be less profitable to individuals than before, its benefits are spread over a greater number, and, in the aggregate, suffer no diminution. The general interests of the country have been subserved in an

important degree by the extension of the coasting trade, where no disturbing influences have been at work ; and the prosperity of the general population cannot fail to react favourably on the mercantile class, through whom the prosperity primarily comes.

Chefoo, the new settlement on the Shantung coast, is frequently a port of call for steamers trading between Shanghae and Tientsin. We did not touch there in the *Nanxing*, but passed at a distance of twelve miles from the bluff rocky headland from which the settlement takes its name. Before darkness had closed in the view we had reached the Mia-tau group of islands which connect the mountain ranges of Shantung, by a continuous chain, with the Liau-tung promontory at the north of the entrance of the Gulf of Pecheli. There is not much difficulty or danger in getting through these islands even at night, but it is always an object to a navigator to reach them before dark. The course is then clear for the Peiho, and he has a whole night's straight run before him with nothing to look out for.

The Peiho river must be an awkward place to "make," except in clear weather. The land is lower even than that of the valley of the Yang-tsze-kiang ; the shoal water runs out a long distance into the gulf ; and a dangerous sand spit, partly above, and partly under water, stretches fifty miles out to sea on the north of the approach to the river. On reaching the outer anchorage, where vessels of heavy draught lie, the celebrated Taku forts are dimly visible in the haze of the horizon, and masts may be seen inside the river, but the low land on either side is still invisible. A shoal bar, with a very hard bottom, lies between the outer anchorage and the river, and the *Nanxing*, drawing less than ten feet, was obliged to anchor outside until the rising tide enabled her to get in.

Our Chinese fellow passengers, who had kept remarkably quiet during the voyage, as is their invariable custom, became animated as we ran in between the Taku forts. They were a motley crowd of all classes of people—mercantile, literary, and military. The students who go to Peking to undergo examinations for literary degrees travel now in great numbers by steamer, and doubtless many who, from want of means, want of time, or from any other cause, might hesitate before undertaking such a long journey by the old land route, are now enabled, by means of the coasting steamers, to accomplish the object so deeply cherished by all Chinese literati. The “plucked” ones, and there are many such in China, can now more easily renew their efforts. Men have been known to repair year after year to the examination-hall from their youth upwards, and get plucked every time,—yet, undaunted by constant failure, they persevere in their vain exertions to the winter of their days. The country that can produce such models of perseverance in a hopeless cause may claim to possess elements of vitality, and the usual proportion of fools.

Among our Chinese passengers was an athlete from Fokien, who was bound to Peking to try his prowess in archery. He was a man of great muscular power, fat, and even corpulent. It is remarkable that the training system adopted for the development of the muscles should produce so much fat. I had not observed this before in the Chinese; indeed, the few feats of strength I have seen performed by them have been by men well proportioned and free from fat. But the Japanese wrestlers, who are carefully trained, are generally fat.

The entrance to the Peiho was, as usual, crowded with native and foreign craft, and so narrow and tortuous is the river that great care is necessary to work a long steamer through without accident. Tientsin is distant from Taku, by the windings of the river, between sixty and seventy miles.

By the cart road it is only thirty-six. The *Nanxing* made good way up the river until darkness compelled her to anchor. In the morning the difficulties of the inland navigation began. The river was actually too small for a steamer over two hundred feet long, the turns were too sharp, the ordinary means of handling a steamer were no longer of any avail,—we hauled round several bad turns by means of anchors passed on shore in the boats, but were at length baffled after running the steamer's nose into cabbage-gardens, breaking down fences, and alarming the villagers, who turned out *en masse* to watch the iron monster as she struggled to force a passage out of her natural element. Partly out of compassion for the men, who were worn out with the uncongenial toil of trudging knee-deep through heavy mud, planting anchors and picking them up again, and partly from some vague hope of a change of tide in the afternoon, the steamer was brought to anchor and hands piped to dinner.

The crews of steamers on the coast of China are usually of a cosmopolite character, chiefly Malays, with a boat's crew of Chinese, the foreign element being reduced to a minimum comprising the officers and engineers. Asiatic sailors do very well when there are plenty of them, the estimate of their value being two of them to one European. They sail for lower wages, but not low enough to compensate the shipowner for the additional numbers that are necessary. But the Asiatics are more easily handled than Europeans; their regular "watches" may be broken in upon with impunity; they are easier fed, and less addicted to quarrelling with their bread and butter than Europeans, and more especially Englishmen. But any doubt on the part of a shipmaster as to what crew he will employ, will generally be solved by the sailors themselves, who, if English or American, will desert at every port the vessel touches at.

Having my saddle and bridle handy I landed at a village,



and borrowing a horse from the farmers, rode to Tientsin, which was only some eight miles distant by the road. The heat was scorching, but greatly mitigated by the mass of bright green foliage that covered the whole country. The soil though dry and dusty is rich to exuberance, fruit grows in great abundance, and, for China, in great perfection. Apples, pears, peaches, apricots, loquats, grapes, are common everywhere in the north, which may be considered the orchard of China. The waving crops of millet, interspersed with patches of beans, and here and there strips of hemp, fill up a vast green ground dotted thickly with villages and pretty clumps of trees. The houses form a dull contrast to the cheerful aspect of the country. In most of the villages they are constructed of mud and straw, which becomes hard enough to be impervious to rain, but the dull parched colour, the small apertures for doors and windows, and general cheerlessness of exterior painfully oppress the sight. The dust of the roads is also an unfavourable medium through which to view the tame though rich beauties of the country. The north of China is cursed with dust, the roads generally are as bad as the road to Epsom on a "Derby day," when that happy event happens to come off in dry weather.

I got back to the *Nanxing* in time for the final effort to double the difficult corner. The first attempt was successful, and we steamed on gaily through fields and gardens, washing the banks with the wave formed in our wake, which sometimes broke over the legs of unwary celestials who stood gazing after the steamer in stupid wonder like a cow at a railway train. The Chinese take such mishaps good-naturedly—the spectators are always amused, and the victims themselves when the shock of surprise passes off laugh at the joke. The most serious obstacle to our progress had yet to come, however, the "double," a point where the river bends abruptly like the figure S compressed vertically.

Extra caution being used there, the appliances of anchors and warps were efficacious, and we passed the double successfully. The smoke of the *Waratah*, a steamer that left Shanghai the day before us, and which we had passed at sea, now appeared over the trees close to us. There were several reaches of the river between us, however, and we traced the black column of smoke passing easily round the bends that had caused us such difficulty. The *Waratah* was gaining on us fast, and late in the evening her black hull appeared under our stern, while the *Nanzing* was jammed at the last bend of the river, unable either to get round herself or to make room for the smaller vessel. Hours were spent in ineffectual endeavours to proceed—the tantalised *Waratah* could stand it no longer—the captain thought he saw room to pass us, and came up at full speed between us and the bank. But as the sailors say “night has no eyes” even when the moon is shining, and our friend paid for his temerity by crashing his paddle box against our bow. Time and patience enabled us to reach Tientsin at midnight on the 1st August, after spending half as much time in the Peiho river as the whole sea voyage had occupied. I have said enough, and probably much more than enough, to demonstrate the difficulty of navigating the Peiho river with vessels not adapted to it. No vessel should attempt it that is over one hundred and fifty feet in length, for though the risk of loss from stranding is extremely small, the loss of time to large vessels must be serious.

A marvellous transformation had taken place in Tientsin since my previous visit to it in 1861. At that time the few European merchants who had settled there were confined to the Chinese town, the filthiest and most offensive of all the filthy places wherein celestials love to congregate. Now in 1863, the “settlement,” that necessary adjunct of every treaty port in China, had been made over to foreigners, laid

out in streets, and a spacious quay and promenade on the river bank formed, faced riverwards with solid masonry, the finest thing of the kind in China, throwing into the shade altogether the famous "bund" at Shanghai. The affairs of the settlement are administered by a thoroughly organised "municipal council" after the example of Shanghai, the "model settlement." The newly opened ports have an immense advantage over the original five in having the experience of nearly twenty years to guide them in all preliminary arrangements. That experience shows first—although the soundness of the deduction has been questioned by some able men—the desirability of securing foreign settlements where merchants, consuls, and missionaries may live in a community of their own entirely distinct from the native towns, within which they may put in operation their own police regulations, lay out streets to their own liking, drain, light, and otherwise improve the settlement, levy and disburse their own municipal taxes, and, in short, conduct their affairs as independent communities. These settlements have the further advantage of being susceptible of defence in times of disturbance with the minimum risk of complication between the treaty powers and the Chinese government. Much of the importance Shanghai has achieved of late years is due to the foreign settlement which, being neutral ground and defensible, has become a city of refuge for swarms of Chinese who had been ousted from their homesteads by the rebels. The cosmopolite character of the Shanghai settlement has entailed various inconveniences, which it is thought might be obviated in the new settlements by keeping the different foreign nationalities distinct. Time has not yet pronounced on the success of this experiment. There will probably be a difficulty in putting it thoroughly in practice; no arbitrary regulations will be able to prevent nationalities from fusing into each other to such an extent as the higher

laws of interest and policy may dictate. And it will be impossible in practice to subject a mixed community to the laws of any one power. In the meantime concessions are claimed from the Chinese government by each of the treaty powers separately, and so far they have been granted. Whether the isolation of the various concessions be permanent or not, it secures for them at the outset more unanimity in laying out streets and framing preliminary regulations for their good government hereafter. This is of great importance, and the experience of Shanghai is most valuable in this respect. The narrowness of the streets in the settlement there—twenty-two feet—is a standing reproach on the earlier settlers who, with short-sighted cupidity, clung with tenacity to every inch of land at a time when land was cheap and abundant. This fatal error has been avoided in the recent settlements.

The municipality of Shanghai established under the auspices of Sir Rutherford (then Mr.) Alcock, at that time British consul, has on the whole proved such a success that the same system has been adopted in the new settlements. \*The legality of the institution has often been questioned, but the creation of some such authority was a necessity at the time, and it has worked so well for ten years that it has not only subsisted, but gathered strength and influence by the unanimous will of the community.

Several fine European houses were already built and inhabited on the Tientsin settlement. The ground had been well raised, so as to keep the new town dry, and ensure it a commanding position. It is about two miles lower down the river than the native town, has a fine open country round it, and plenty of fresh air. It is several degrees cooler in the British settlement than in the Chinese town, and altogether the very best site for the purpose has been selected. The merchants retain their offices in the Chinese town, riding

or sailing to and fro every day. This system will probably continue to be practised for some time longer, or perhaps altogether, for the convenience of the Chinese dealers. A small minority of the foreign merchants would compel all to retain their business premises in Tientsin, and nothing less than an almost entire unanimity among them would effect the transfer to the new town.

As a *dépôt* of trade, Tientsin labours under certain disadvantages; the shallow bar outside, and intricate navigation of the river, prevent any but small craft from trading there. Larger vessels do sometimes, or rather did,—for I fancy the practice is discontinued,—repair to the outer anchorage. But the expense of lighterage, and the detention incurred in loading or discharging at such a distance from the port, are so great as to drive such competitors out of the field. The other drawback to Tientsin is the severe winter, and the early closing of the river by ice. This generally happens before the end of November, and the ice does not break up before February or March.

However, Tientsin is the feeder of a large tract of country containing a large consuming population, and the trade is no doubt destined to increase. Much disappointment has, indeed, been felt that the extraordinary start made, chiefly in the sale of foreign manufactures, in the first year of its existence as a port of foreign trade, has not been followed up. This may be explained, however, by the circumstance that in 1860-61 manufactured goods were extremely depressed by over-supply in the south of China. These goods were introduced into Tientsin, and sold direct to the Chinese there, untaxed by the intermediate profits and charges they formerly had to bear when sold in Shanghai, and thence forwarded by Chinese merchants, in Chinese junks, to Tientsin and the north. Prices in Tientsin soon fell so low that the merchants were tempted into large investments

during 1861. The markets of the interior became overstocked, and, before the equilibrium was restored, the cotton famine began to be felt, and prices of goods (the Tientsin trade is chiefly opium and cotton goods) rose so high as to deter purchasers, and in a material degree to reduce the consumption of foreign cottons. Another circumstance also operated adversely to a maintenance of the lively trade that grew up in 1861. There were no exports in Tientsin suitable to any foreign market. The foreign trade was therefore limited to the sale of imports, which were paid for in specie. A heavy drain of bullion was the result, more than the resources of the country could bear for any length of time. This of itself was enough to check the further development of trade; for though the precious metals were merely transferred from one part of the country to another, no counter-balancing power then existed by which they could be circulated back to the districts whence they came. There is no good reason why produce suitable to foreign markets should not be found in Tientsin. Wool and tallow will no doubt be obtainable in considerable quantities in process of time, for the country is full of sheep and cattle, and Tientsin is only six days' journey from the frontier of Mongolia, where flocks and herds monopolise the soil.

I must mention a circumstance connected with the Tientsin trade, which is remarkable among an eminently commercial people like the Chinese. At the opening of the trade, in the end of 1860, the relative values of gold and silver varied fifteen per cent. between Tientsin and Shanghai. Gold was purchased for silver in the north, and shipped to Shanghai, at a large profit, and a good many months elapsed before an equilibrium was established.

In and about Tientsin, as almost everywhere else in China, the population is well affected towards foreigners. The British troops that garrisoned Tientsin from 1860 till 1862

left behind them the very best impressions on the inhabitants. Not that these troops were any better than any other well-disciplined troops would have been, but the Chinese had been taught to regard foreigners as a kind of aquatic monsters, cruel and ferocious; so when the horrible picture resolved itself into human beings, civil and courteous in their disposition, honestly paying for all they wanted, of vast consumptive powers in the matter of beef and mutton, fruit and vegetables, and, on the whole, excellent customers, the Chinese took kindly to the estimable invaders, and had cause to regret their departure. Foreign merchants were held in high estimation from the first. The free hospitals for Chinese, set on foot by the army surgeons, not only did a great deal of good in alleviating suffering, but prepared the way for mutual good feeling in the after intercourse between natives and foreigners. It has been questioned whether the Chinese, as a race, are susceptible of gratitude. But, at any rate, the respectable classes are sufficiently charitable themselves to appreciate philanthropy in others; and, in the self-imposed and gratuitous labours of the surgeons for the benefit of the sick poor, they saw an example of pure benevolence, which could not but excite their admiration.

The population of Tientsin is supposed to be about 400,000, residing chiefly in the suburbs, for trade is generally carried on without the walls, not only here, but in all Chinese cities. There is an unusually large proportion of beggars about Tientsin, and loathsome objects they are, as they whine about the streets, half clad, in tatters, starved, and often covered with sores. They never sleep but on the ground. At night, when the streets are quiet, the beggars may be discovered huddled together at every corner and on every door-step. Begging is an institution in China, and to qualify for the craft, men have been said to burn out their own eyes, in order to excite compassion for their blindness. A Chinese

householder seldom allows a beggar to go away empty. Charity is cheap ; a handful of rice, one copper cash, value the fourth part of a farthing, suffices to induce the disgusting object to move on to the next shop. The beggars have seldom any cause to starve in China, but they do very often, and it is probable they bring diseases on themselves in their efforts to excite pity, which carry them off very rapidly. In winter, especially in the north, they seem to die off like mosquitoes, and no one takes any notice of them except to bury them—for the Chinese don't like to leave dead bodies about the streets. In spring they reappear—not the identical beggars, certainly—but very similar ones, and the ranks of the profession are kept filled.

The wealthier natives of Tientsin, traders and shopkeepers, are fond of good living and gambling. They are robust people, and bear up well against the effects of late hours and gross dissipation. The close, filthy atmosphere in which they live and breathe does not seem to injure their health. Epidemics do make great havoc among them occasionally ; one year it is cholera, another year it is small-pox ; but the general healthiness of the people does not seem to suffer. The climate is exceedingly dry. Little rain or snow falls ; but when it does rain, the whole heavens seem to fall at once, not in torrents, but in sheets of water. The peculiar sand-storms, so common in the north of China, have not as yet been satisfactorily investigated. They often come on after a sultry day. A yellow haze appears in the sky, darkening the sun ; then columns of fine dust are seen spinning round in whirlwinds. At that stage every living thing seeks shelter, and those who are afield are lucky if they are not caught in the blinding storm before they reach their houses. But even a closely shut-up house affords but half protection, for the fine powdery dust insinuates itself through the crevices of doors and windows, and is palpably present in your soup and



your bread for some time after. The most obvious source whence these sand-storms come, is the great sandy desert of Mongolia, but such an hypothesis is hardly sufficient to account for all the phenomena which accompany the sand-storms. It has been supposed that they are due to some peculiar electrical condition of the atmosphere.

The Chinese are passionately addicted to gambling, and the endless variety of games of chance in common use among them does credit to their ingenuity and invention, for it is not likely that they have learned anything from their neighbours. The respectable merchant, who devotes the hours of daylight assiduously to his business, sparing no labour in adjusting the most trifling items of account, will win or lose thousands of dollars overnight with imperturbable complacency. Every grade of society is imbued with the passion. I have amused myself watching the coolies in the streets of Tientsin gambling for their dinner. The itinerant cooks carry with them, as part of the wonderful epitome of a culinary establishment with which they perambulate the streets, a cylinder of bamboo, containing a number of sticks on which are inscribed certain characters. These mystic symbols are shaken up in the tube, the candidate for hot dumpling draws one, and according to the writing found on it, so does he pay for his repast. So attractive is gambling in any form to the Chinese that a Tientsin coolie will generally prefer to risk paying double for the remote chance of getting a meal for nothing. On one occasion I volunteered to act as proxy for a hungry coolie who was about to try his luck. The offer was accepted with eagerness, and I was fortunate enough to draw my constituent a dinner for nothing. I was at once put down as a professor of the black art, and literally besieged by a crowd of others, all begging me to do them a similar favour, which, of course, I prudently declined. Had I indeed been successful a second time, the

dispenser of the tempting morsels would certainly have protested against my interference as an invasion of his prerogative, which is to win, and not to lose.

The Chinese gamblers are, of course, frequently ruined by the practice. They become desperate after a run of ill luck; every consideration of duty and interest is sunk, and they play for stakes which might have startled even the Russian nobles, who used to gamble for serfs. In the last crisis of all, a dose of opium settles all accounts pertaining to this world.

In games of skill the Chinese are no less accomplished. Dominoes, draughts, chess, and such like, are to be seen in full swing at every tea-house, where the people repair to gossip and while away the evening. The little groups one sees in these places exhibit intense interest in their occupation; the victory is celebrated by the child-like exultation of the winner, and any pair of Chinese draught-players may have sat for Wilkie's celebrated picture.

## CHAPTER II.

### TIENTSIN TO PEKING.

THERE are several modes of going from Tientsin to Peking. The most common is in a mule cart, which is not exactly a box, but a board laid on wheels with a blue cotton covering arched over it. The cart is not long enough to enable one to lie down full length, nor is it high enough to enable him to sit upright in the European fashion. It has no springs; the roads are generally as rough as negligence can leave them; it is utterly impossible to keep out the dust; and the covering gives but slight protection from the sun. A ride in a Chinese cart is exquisite torture to a European. It is true that experience teaches those who are so unfortunate as to need it several "dodges" by which to mitigate their sufferings, such as filling the cart entirely with straw, and then squeezing into the middle of it. But then the traveller must have some means of securing the feet to prevent being pitched out bodily, and he must hold on to the frame-work of the side by both hands to break the shock of sudden jerks. With all that he will come off his journey feeling in every bone of his body as if he had been passed through a mangle. That the Chinese do not suffer from such treatment I can only attribute to a deficiency in their nervous system. If they suffered in anything like the same degree that a European does, they would have invented a more comfortable conveyance before the Christian era. But the only improvement in comfort I ever heard of is in the carts made for the great

mandarins, which have the wheels placed far back, so that between the axle-tree and the saddle the shafts may have an infinitesimal amount of spring in them.

The next mode of travelling is on horseback, which, if you happen to have your own saddle and bridle, is very pleasant, provided the weather is not too hot or too cold. There are plenty of inns on the road-side where you can rest and refresh yourself; but woe betide the luckless traveller who, like myself, nauseates the Chinese *cuisine*, should he have neglected to provide himself with a few creature comforts to his own liking.

The weather was excessively hot, and judging that there would be many calls on our stamina before our long journey was done, we prudently husbanded our strength at the outset. We therefore chose the slower but more luxurious (!) means of conveyance by boat up the Peiho river to Tungchow, a walled city twelve miles from Peking. Boat travelling in the north has not been brought to such a state of perfection as in the creek and canal country in Chekiang and Keangsoo. In the latter provinces it is practically the only means of travelling, and though slow, is most comfortable. In the north the boats are a smaller edition of those used for transporting merchandise, the only convenience they have being a moveable roof. In two such craft our party embarked on the night of 5th August, 1861, and at 11 p.m., by moonlight, we languidly shoved off from the filthy banks of the Peiho river, the few friends who were kind enough to see us off, with a refinement of politeness worthy of a Chinaman, refusing a parting glass, knowing that we had none to spare. Our sails were of little assistance, so after threading our way through the fleet of boats that lay anyhow in the first two reaches, our stout crews landed with their towing line, by which means we slowly and painfully ascended the stream. Tientsin, as I have said, is the filthiest of all filthy

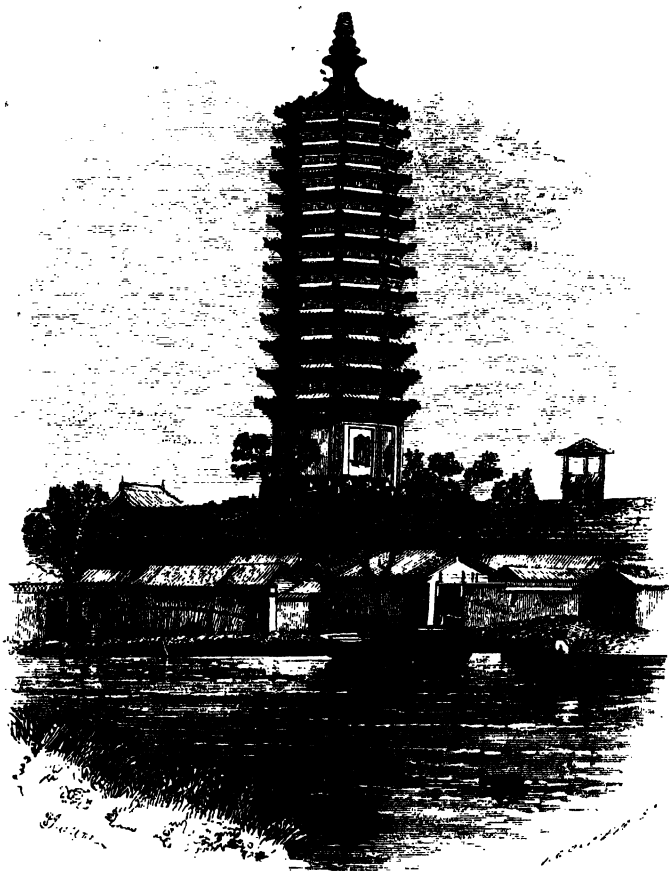
cities; and the essence of its filth is accumulated on the banks of the river, forming an excellent breakwater, which grows faster than the water can wash it away. The putrid mass is enough, one would think, to breed a plague, and yet the water used by the inhabitants is drawn from this river! It was pleasant, indeed, to escape from this pestilential atmosphere, and to inhale the cool fresh air of the country for an hour or two before turning in, as we reflected on the long and tedious journey we had before us, embracing the whole breadth of the continents of Asia and Europe.

The voyage to Tungchow was monotonous in the extreme. Nothing of the country could be seen; for though the water was high enough at the time to have enabled us to look over the low flat banks, the standing crops effectually shut in our view. Four days were occupied in travelling 400 li. We had engaged double crews, in order that we might proceed night and day without stopping, but it was really hard work for them, and we did not like to press them too much. There is no regular towing path on the banks of the Peiho, and at night the men floundered in the wet mud amongst reeds. A youngster of the crew gave us a great deal of trouble—always shirking his work and complaining of hunger. He was a wag, however, and kept both us and the crew in amusement. I have noticed in nearly all Chinese boat-crews there is a character of this sort, whose business seems to be to work as little as possible himself, and keep up a running fire of wit to beguile the toil of the others. A good story-teller is much valued among them. We had also an old man, whose chief business was to boil rice and vegetables for the others, and to steer the boat. His kitchen duties were no sinecure, for the men did get through an incredible quantity of rice in the course of the day. Rice is a poor thing to work on; it is a fuel quickly consumed, and requires constant renewal.

It is the nature of Chinese boatmen to be constantly asking for money. The custom is to pay about half the fare in advance before starting, and the other half when the journey is completed. But no sooner are you fairly under way, than a polite request is made for money to buy rice. It is in vain you remind them of the dollars you have just paid as a first instalment. That has gone to the owner of the boat, of course, but as for them, the boatmen, they have nothing to eat, and cannot go on. Defeated in your arguments you nevertheless remain firm in your purpose; the morning, noon, and evening meals succeed each other in due course. Every one is to be the last, and is followed by the most touching appeals to your benevolence—they will go down on their knees, they will whine and cry, they will beat frantically on their empty stomachs, and tell you “they are starving” in tones and gestures that ought properly to melt the heart of a stone. It is in vain that you deride their importunity; it is in vain that you reproach them with their improvidence. You sternly order them to their work, but are met by the unanswerable question, how can they work without food? You—if you have gone through the ordeal before—know well that you will have no trouble on this score on the second day out.

Has any one ever tried to arrive at the exact value of a Chinese measure of distance? Their li has no doubt been reduced to so many yards, feet, and inches, equal to about one-third of an English mile, on paper; but on the road it is the vaguest term possible. Ask a countryman how far it is to Chung-dsz, and he will answer after a great deal of prevarication ten li. Walk about that distance and inquire again, and you are told it is fifteen li. This will puzzle you if you are a stranger, but go on another half mile, and you find you are at your destination. In the common acceptation of the word, I am convinced it is more a measure of time





TUNG CHOW PAGODA.



than distance, and 100 li is an average day's journey. Our Tientsin boatmen put this very prominently when questioned, as they were nearly every hour of the day, as to how far we still were from Tungchow, one of them answered, "If you travel quick it is about 100 li, but if slow it is well on to 200!"

In the first part of our journey we met with no traffic on the river, but towards Tungchow we passed large fleets of junks bound upwards and a few bound down. John Bell says of this river, "I saw many vessels sailing down the stream towards the south-east. And I was informed there are nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine vessels constantly employed on this river; but why confined to such an odd number I could neither learn nor comprehend." I should say that during the 140 years that have elapsed since that was written the fleet is more likely to have been shorn of a few odd thousands than increased by the odd unit.

On the fourth day, as we were panting for breath, with the thermometer standing at 97° Fahr., and with anxious eyes contemplating our almost empty ice-box, the pagoda of Tungchow was descried over the tall reeds on the river bank, and we soon were made fast in front of a temple called Fang-wang-meaou.

At this point the Peiho dwindles away into a very small and shallow stream, and practically Tungchow is the head of the navigation, the shipping port of Peking, and the beginning of the land carriage to the north-west provinces of China.

The Fang-wang-meaou is much used by Russians as a dépôt for their goods in transit from Tientsin and Shanghae to Siberia. We found a considerable quantity of tea stored in the temple waiting for transport. In this temple, therefore, by the favour of the reverend personages who preside

over it, we bestowed our *impedimenta*, and took up our quarters for the night in a wing of the building.

The Bhuddist priests are in the habit of transacting business for strangers, and we therefore entered into negotiation with them to provide us carriage either by mules or camels, from Tungchow to Chan-kia-kow, the frontier town between China and Mongolia. We thought by this arrangement we could ride to Peking, do what we wanted there in the way of getting passports, &c., and return to Tungchow and take our departure thence. This proved a delusion, and lost us some valuable time.

There is nothing remarkable about the city of Tungchow. It is situated on a dead level. From a tower on the wall a view of the country is obtained, including the mountains north of Peking. There is a tall pagoda in the city, but as it has no windows in it, it is useless as a look-out.

I found here two ponies that I had sent from Tientsin, in charge of a Chinese "ma-foo" or groom, who agreed to accompany me as far as Chan-kia-kow. My object was to be independent of the Chinese carts at Peking and on the road, and I looked forward to taking one, if not both, of my ponies a considerable distance into the desert of Mongolia. I strongly recommend this plan to any one travelling in that quarter.

On the 10th of August I rode to Peking, the rest of the party following in carts. This would no doubt be a very pretty ride at another season of the year, but in the month of August the millet crops stand as high as twelve and fifteen feet, completely shutting in the road for nearly the whole distance. At eight li from Tung-chow we passed the village and handsome stone bridge of *Pa-li-keau* or "eight-mile-bridge," which euphonious name gives a title to a distinguished French general. There are no "high" roads, but many bye-roads, and it is not difficult to lose one's way

amongst the standing millet. Many parts of the country are very prettily wooded, and there is a half-way house at a well-shaded part of the road, where you naturally dismount to rest yourself under a mat shed, and indulge yourself with hot tea, than which nothing is more refreshing on a hot day, provided the decoction be not too strong, and is unadulterated by the civilised addition of sugar or milk. You may eat fruit here also if you are not afraid of the consequences (but take care that it is ripe), and some naked urchins will cut fresh grass for your beasts. This little place, like many others of its kind, is a "howf" for many loafers, who seek the cool shade, and sit sipping their boiling tea, and languidly fanning themselves while they listen abstractedly to the conversation of the wayfarers.

As we near Peking we come to some slight undulations, and notice some very pretty places with clumps of old trees about them. These are principally graves of great men, and it is remarkable to observe how much attention is paid by the Chinese to the abodes of their dead. Wealthy people will pass their lives in a dismal hovel, something between a pig-stye and a rabbit-warren, into which the light of day can scarcely penetrate; the floors of earth or brick-paved, or if the party is luxurious, he may have a floor of wood, encrusted with the dirt of a generation. But these same people look forward to being buried under a pretty grove of trees, in a nicely kept enclosure, with carefully cultivated shrubs and flowers growing round. Some of the loveliest spots I have seen in China are tombs, the finest I remember being at the foot of the hill behind the city of Chung-zu, near Foo-shan, on the Yang-tsze-kiang. These tombs, adorned with so much taste and care, were in strange contrast with the general rottenness around. But armies have since been there, and it is probable that the angel of destruction has swept it all away.

I am unable to say from what feeling springs this tender regard for tombs among the Chinese. It may be that they consider the length of time they have to lie in the last resting-place, reasonably demands that more care be bestowed on it than on the earthly tenement of which they have so short a lease. Or it may arise simply out of that strong principle of filial piety so deeply engraven in the Chinese mind, and which leads them to make great sacrifices when required to do honour to the manes of their ancestors. From whatever motive it comes, however, this filial piety, which even death does not destroy, is an admirable trait in the Chinese character; and I have even heard divines point to the Chinese nation—the most long-lived community the world has seen—as an illustration of the promise attached to the keeping of the fifth commandment. The greatest consolation a Chinaman can have in the “hour of death” is that he will be buried in a coffin of his own selection, and that he has children or grandchildren to take care of his bones. It is to this end that parents betroth their children when young, and hasten the marriages as soon as the parties are marriageable. To this end also I believe polygamy is allowed by law, or at all events not interdicted. If a Chinaman could have the promise made to him, “Thou shalt never want a man to stand before me,” he would live at ease for the rest of his days.

15207.

There are no cemeteries in China, that I know of, except where strangers congregate—when they of a family, a district, or even a province, combine to buy a piece of ground to bury their dead in. In hilly countries pretty sites are always selected for tombs. In the thickly settled parts of the country every family buries its own dead in its own bit of ground. Thus, when they sell land for building purposes, negotiations have to be entered into for removing the coffins of many forgotten generations. The bones are carefully gathered up and

put into earthenware jars, and labelled. This operation is profanely called "potting ancestors." These jars are then buried somewhere else—of course with great economy of space. A house built on the site of an old grave that is suspected of having been only partially emptied, would remain tenantless for ever, and if the ghosts of the departed did not destroy the house, the owner would be compelled to do so.

But I am getting away from the Peking road. Amongst the tombs of great families, outside the walls of the city, are many old marble colossal sculptures of men and animals. The same figures, in limestone, are common in other parts of the country. These sculptures are all more or less dilapidated; some of the figures are still erect; many have fallen down and got broken; and many have been ploughed in. There is nothing remarkable about the workmanship of these, although the colossal size of some of them is striking. They are interesting as memorials of departed greatness, and record their silent protest against the corruption, decay, and degeneracy that has brought the Chinese empire so low.

Water communicating with the Peiho river goes up to the walls of Peking, but is not navigable. It forms a quiet lagoon, the delight of great flocks of the most beautiful ducks and geese. The streams that run through the city can also be connected with the water outside through the arches in the wall; and I am told the intention of those truly great men, who conceived and executed the grand canal, was to bring the water through the city and into the imperial quarters by navigable canals, so that the grain-junks from Keangsoo, which were to supply the capital with food, might be brought in to the gate of the Emperor's palace. It is not to be wondered at that this scheme should have broken down, considering the engineering difficulties attending it.

## CHAPTER III.

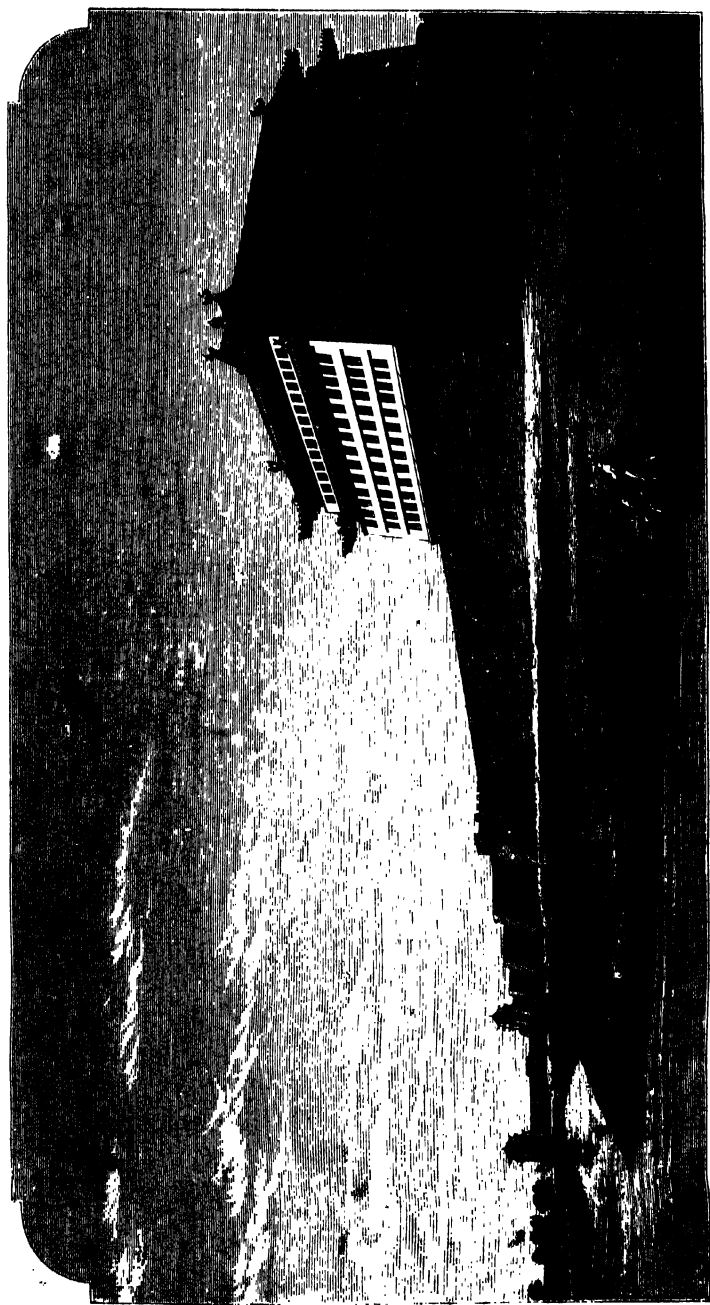
### PEKING.

NOTHING of the city of Peking is visible until you are close under the walls, and then the effect is really imposing. The walls are high, massive, and in good repair. The double gates, with their lofty and large three-storied towers over them, and the general solid appearance, inspire one with some of the admiration which poor old Marco Polo used to evince when speaking of the glories of Kambalie, or the city of the Grand Khan.

Once inside the walls you instinctively exclaim, What a hot, dusty place this is! and you call to mind that that is exactly what everybody told you long before its threshold was polluted by barbarian footsteps. Peking is celebrated for its carts, its heat, and its dust. If it rained much the streets would be a sea of mud.

We pursue our way along the sandy tracks between the city wall and the buildings of the town for a mile or two, then plunge into the labyrinth of streets, crowded, dirty and odoriferous. We are being conducted to an inn which is to be better than any that foreigners have been admitted to before.

In our way we crossed the main street which leads from the imperial city straight to the Temples of Heaven and Earth. This street is very wide, and has been very fine, but now more than half its width is occupied by fruit, toy, and fish stalls. The centre of the street has been cut up by cart-



From a photograph.

WALLS OF PEKING.





## POSTSCRIPT.

EVENTS have progressed rapidly in China since the foregoing chapter was written. Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, after resigning his commission in the Chinese army for the reasons I have mentioned, apparently considered that it would be too hazardous at such a juncture to leave the Government entirely to its own devices. He accordingly remained, with the approval of Major-General Brown, to instruct and advise them, and he has had the satisfaction to witness the crowning success of all his labours, in the fall of Nanking, and the extinction of the Taeping rebellion.

The two provinces of Che-Kiang and Keang-soo—the richest and most populous in China—are now freed from rebels, and have had peace and order once more restored to them. It may require some little time entirely to reassure the populations of these provinces of the security of life and property in districts that have so long languished under the devastating effects of civil war; but there is now every reason to suppose that the reign of anarchy has been banished for many years to come, and that the pacified region will soon enjoy the prosperity which its natural advantages must bring, enhanced, as it must inevitably be, by the extended intercourse with foreigners which has not yet had an opportunity of bearing its full fruit.

This success of the Imperial arms has naturally resulted from the acceptance of foreign Ministers at the Court of

Peking, and the introduction of China into the family of nations, which is the great triumph of the policy inaugurated by Lord Palmerston twenty-four years ago, and steadfastly followed up by that statesman through good and evil report.

Whether the scattered remnants of the Taepings will again become formidable from their concentration in the province of Kiang-si, beyond the reach of the immediate foreign aid which has led to their dispersion, will depend very much on the vigour of the Imperial Government at Peking. If it realises the gravity of the position, and the truth of the maxim that prevention is better than cure, it will adopt timely and energetic measures to anticipate a reorganisation of the Taepings.

But, however that may be, it is pretty certain that if the provisions of the Treaty were carried out in the broad sense evidently contemplated by the framers of it; if the Poyang lake and the rivers which communicate with it were freely opened to foreign trade; if Europeans were permitted to reside at the commercial marts of Kiang-si, their moral weight alone, especially after the campaign just concluded in Keang-soo and Che-Kiang, would go far to prevent any further demonstration of the rebels in that quarter. The authorities at Peking may yet find cause to regret that their suspicion of friendly foreigners has deprived them of such important auxiliaries at many of their most vulnerable points.

*October 27.*

THE END.





wheels for many centuries, and is full of holes and quagmires, so that the practicable portion of this wide thoroughfare is narrowed down to nothing. So it is with all the wide streets of Peking. They are never made. Filth accumulates incredibly fast; and the wider the street the dirtier it is, because it can hold the more.

At last we arrived at this paragon of inns, and passing through the courtyard, where the horses and mules of travellers were tied up, we threaded our way as far into the interior of the establishment as we could get, and then called the landlord. He pretended to make a great to-do about receiving us, and strongly urged that we would find much better accommodation at the West-end. This was not to be thought of, and we soon installed ourselves in a room—but such a room! and such an inn! and such attendance! and such filth everywhere! I have slept in a good many Chinese inns of all sorts, but the meanest road-side hostelry I have ever seen is a degree better than this swell inn in this fashionable city of Kanbalu. Our room was at the far end of the labyrinthine passages, and was evidently constructed to exclude light and air. It was almost devoid of furniture. We certainly could make shift for sleeping accommodation, for travellers can manage with wonderfully little in that way; but we were miserably off for chairs, the only thing we had to sit upon being small wooden stools on four legs, the seat being about five inches wide.

There was no getting anything to eat in this establishment, so we fell in with the Peking custom of dining at a restaurant, and we found a very good one on the opposite side of the street. This was a nice cheerful place, with good airy rooms, and comfortable cushioned seats—much frequented by the Pekingese. Here we always got a good dinner, and met good society. We could not stomach the pure native messes, but as they had always abundance of

good mutton and fish (kept alive on the premises till wanted), also rice, clean and white, with a little preliminary instruction in our manner of living, the *cuisinrière* hit off our taste to a nicety. We had our own knives and forks to eat with, and our own good liquor to season the repast, so in Peking we may be said to have lived well.

We used to meet a strange mixture of people in this restaurant—natives of Canton, Yunnan, Szechune, Shansi—in short, of every part of China; men whose lawful occasions brought them to the capital. Most of them were merchants, and I presume the students who flock to Peking in such number form little cliques of their own. These fellows lead a very jovial life. About seven o'clock, or a little later, they assemble in parties already made up, and dinner is laid, each party having a separate room. They eat heartily, and seem thoroughly to enjoy each other's society. They don't hurry over their dinner, and they have such an infinity of small dishes, that their repast spreads itself over several hours. They are very quiet at the first onset, but as they warm up with their wine, they get very noisy, and make the whole place ring with the sounds of merriment. They drink their wine hot, out of small porcelain cups, and instead of a decanter, a tea-kettle is put on the table. We used to amuse ourselves by going from one party to another, and joining for a ~~few~~ minutes in their conviviality. They were always pleased to see us, and made us sit down and drink with them. We reciprocated their hospitality, and when we had administered a glass of wine to one of them, he would sip it with an air of grave meditation, then slap his paunch vigorously, and, holding up his right thumb, would exclaim with emphasis "Haou!" "super-excellent."

They have a methodical manner of drinking, which is no less entertaining to spectators, than agreeable to themselves. The libations are regulated by a game of forfeits, engaged in

by two at a time. The challenger holds out one or more fingers, accompanying the action by certain set phrases. The other has to reply promptly to the word and the pantomime, the penalty for a mistake being to drink a cup of wine. They begin this process quietly and soberly, but when an obstinate antagonist is found, who replies to the challenge five or six times running without a break-down, the contest becomes exciting. They gradually rise from their seats, and approach each other across the table, their faces grow red, as their shouting gets louder, and the repartee more spirited, until they reach a climax of passion which flesh and blood could not long sustain, and then explode like a bomb-shell amid tremendous bursts of unearthly yells from the full company. The loser sips his liquor with resignation; and the victor generally joins him, by way of showing himself a generous adversary. I have heard of drinking "by rule of thumb," in our own country, but this has probably nowhere been reduced to a science so much as in China.

About nine or ten, a long string of carts (the cabs of Peking), would be collected at the door, the parties would begin to break up, and go their several ways to the theatres, or other evening amusements. They generally make a night of it, and that class of the Chinese are everywhere late in their habits. I never met a more robust-looking, or more jovial, hearty set of men, than these, our boon companions of Peking.

On arriving in Peking, I lost no time in calling on Sir F. Bruce, our minister there, to get passports put in train. I was fortunate enough to meet Sir Frederick, as he had just come in for a day from his retreat in the hills. He has occupied a temple situated on the hills, some twenty miles from Peking, which forms an admirable summer residence, free from the putrid smells of the city, and with a temperature many degrees cooler,—no mean advantage when the

thermometer stands about 90°. The building set apart for the English legation in Peking is, from an eastern point of view, magnificent. It was a "foo," or ducal palace, has large space for garden ground round the principal building, while the smaller buildings would easily accommodate a full regiment of soldiers.

We found that it would take several days to get our papers in order; for not only was my passport to be got, but my companion had to get his through the French legation. There was nothing for it but to make ourselves easy, having done all that we could do to accelerate our business. Now, at another season of the year, I could have spent a week in Peking with pleasure, but in the month of August one cannot go out with any degree of comfort or safety, except in the morning or evening, and then the streets are full either of blinding dust, or black mire, in which your horse is always splashing up to his hocks. However, we tried to make the best of it, and I was fortunate enough to meet my old friend, Dr. Lockhart, who had lived long enough in Peking to know the ropes, and who was good-natured enough to show me round the principal objects of interest in the city. Another difficulty besets the sight-seer in Peking, and that is the "magnificent distances" between the various places one wants to see. However, by sallying forth betimes, we did manage to visit a few of the many interesting objects in this old city; for there is nothing really worthy of note in China, except what bears the stamp of antiquity.

The Confucian temple was the first object of our curiosity. Here the great sage is worshipped by the Emperor once a year, without the medium of paintings or images. In the central shrine there is merely a small piece of wood, a few inches long, standing upright, with a few characters inscribed on it, the name of the sage, I believe. On the sides are a number of still smaller wooden labels, representing the dis-







PAVILION OF THE SUMMER PALACE OF  
YUEN-MIN-YUEN.

iples and commentators who have elucidated the writings of Confucius. The temple contains a number of stone tablets, on which are engraved the record of honours conferred on literary men, and to obtain a place here is the acme of the ambition of Chinese scholars. In the courtyard there are a number of pine trees, said to have been planted during the reign of the Mongol dynasty, more than 500 years ago. These trees have been stunted in their growth, however, from want of room, and considering their age, their size is disappointing. The courtyard is adorned by a variety of stone sculptures, the gifts of successive emperors and dynasties. The present dynasty has been rather jealous of its predecessors in this respect, especially of the Ming, and has replaced many fine relics of their time by new ones of its own. There are, however, several Mongol tablets to the fore in the Confucian temple. A connoisseur can at once, from the style, fix the date of any of these works of art, and when in doubt, the inscriptions are for the most part sufficiently legible to tell their own tale. In another part of the building there are some very curious old stones, drum-shaped, dating from 800 years B.C. These have been carefully preserved, but the iron tooth of time has obliterated most of the writing on them. The curious old characters are still to some extent legible, however. The building itself is, from a Chinese point of view, a noble one, and singularly enough, it is kept in perfect order, in strange contrast to Chinese temples and public buildings generally. It has a magnificent ceiling, very high, and the top of the interior walls are ornamented by wooden boards, richly painted, bearing the names of the successive emperors in raised gilt characters. On the accession of an emperor he at once adds his name to the long list.

The hall erected by the learned Emperor Kienloong, although modern (he reigned from 1736 to 1796), is a mag-

nificent pavilion, not very large, but beautifully finished, and in perfect good taste. The pavilion is roofed with the imperial yellow tiles. Round it is a promenade paved with white marble, with balustrades of the same. At a little distance from the pavilion stands a triumphal arch, massive and elegant. The pavilion is intended to be viewed through the arch, from a stand-point a few yards behind it, so that the arch forms a frame for the main building. The effect produced is peculiar and striking, and does infinite credit to the taste of old Kienloong, who, by the bye, seems to have done everything that has been done in modern times to beautify the capital. The pavilion stands in the middle of a large open square, on two sides of which, under a shed, stand double rows of stone tablets, six or seven feet high. On these tablets are engraved, in clear and distinct characters, the whole of the Chinese classics, in such a manner that they can be printed from. Many copies have actually been struck off from these tablets, and are held in very high esteem.

The great lamasery is outside the city, but the lama temple or monastery inside is also well worthy of notice, whether from the vast quantity of bricks and mortar that go to make the range of buildings, the extent of the grounds attached to it, including a fine wooded park, or from the internal economy of the establishment itself. Two thousand Mongol lamas are maintained here by the bounty of the Emperor.\* The other lamaseries are in the same manner liberally endowed by the government. The Chinese emperor feels that they have but a slight hold on their Mongol subjects, scattered as they are over a vast desert, where no Chinese troops could penetrate, even were the Chinese a match for the Mongols in a military point of view, which they never were. The independence of the Mongols would

\* The first Emperor of the Manchu line originated the scheme, but it has been greatly extended by his successors.

be rather a gain than a loss to China in its immediate results, but it would establish a warlike race on their borders, which has been the terror of China from the earliest times. No doubt, ages of peace have done much to subdue the warlike spirit of the Mongols, but they retain their ancient habits and lead a life of privation and hardship from the cradle to the grave. They are susceptible of the greatest enthusiasm, and at a word from their chiefs they would be ready to follow them to death or glory. A few years of fighting would render the Mongol hordes as formidable to a non-military nation like the Chinese, as they were in the days of the terrible Genghis Khan. In the present enfeebled condition of China an irruption of Mongols would be irresistible, and would sweep everything before it like a flood. The Chinese government are quite alive to such a possible contingency, and hence the care they take to conciliate the Mongols. Their forty-eight kings (of whom San-go-lin-sin is one), nominally tributary to China, are really pensioned by the Emperor, and every inducement is held out to the Mongol lamas to settle in the monasteries in Peking. Here they live in comfort and luxury unknown in their deserts. Their friends have every facility for visiting them, and carrying back to the "land of grass" their reports of the goodness of the Chinese Emperor. The lamas are taken from all parts of Mongolia—we conversed with several from Dolonor and Kuren (Urga), and many others from the north and south, the names of whose districts were not included in my geographical vocabulary. These large Mongol communities, under the eye and hand of the Emperor, answer the double purpose of conciliators on the one hand and of hostages for the loyalty of distant tribes on the other. The Mongols are as little a match for the Chinese in craft, as they are superior to them in martial energy. It is supposed that the Chinese government have a deep design in supporting and encourag-

ing lamaism, an institution which makes nearly one-third of the Mongol race celibats—for there are female as well as male lamas—the object being to keep down the population of the tribes.

However, the simple-minded Mongols lead a comfortable, easy life in Peking, free from care, and with no occupation except chanting their prayers. I was fortunate enough to witness one of their religious services in the great temple. The building is raised some ten feet from the ground, a fine flight of steps running round the four sides of it. The roof is very high, and the sides are open all round. The lamas muster leisurely out of their cells, dressed in dirty red cotton garments, and armed with an enormous yellow cap, with something of a helmet shape, and crested with a long fringe made, I think, of camel's hair. They carry the cap for the most part under their arm, seldom wearing it on the head. About 200 of them assembled in the temple, and sung a chant which lasted about half an hour. The effect was very striking and solemn, for the music was good, and one or two of the lamas had the finest bass voices I ever heard. The apparent earnestness with which the whole congregation joined in the service, and the deep, devotional character of the music, riveted our attention with an irresistible power. So different was it from the ludicrous mockery of sacred things perpetrated by the Chinese Bhuddists, during whose most solemn services I have seen a dirty fellow push his way through the devotees and coolly light his pipe at the candles burning on the altar.

The analogies between the Bhuddist and Roman Catholic forms of worship have been so hackneyed by writers that it may seem impertinent in me to allude to them. But I cannot help drawing attention to the manner in which M. Huc endeavours to explain them. The analogies are most complete in the Yellow Cap Lama sect, the origin of

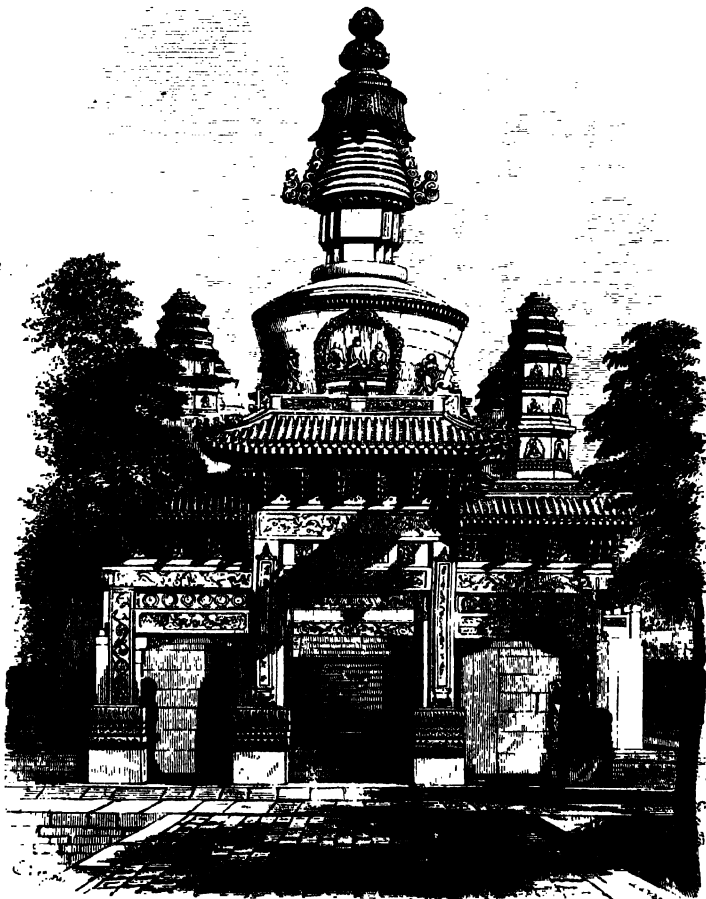
which is described at length by Huc. In the thirteenth century, in the country of Amdo, bordering on Thibet, a child miraculously conceived was born with a white beard, and from his birth gave utterance to profound sayings concerning the destiny of man. His name was Tsong-Kamba. This prodigy of a child became an ascetic, devoting himself to meditation and prayer. A holy stranger from the west visited him, and amazed him by his sanctity and learning. The stranger was remarkable for his long nose. After instructing Tsong-Kamba for a few years in the mysteries of religion the holy man died ; but Tsong-Kamba became a great reformer, and originated the new sect of the Yellow Cap Lamas. Huc clutches at this tradition, and thinks he sees in the mysterious visitor of Tsong-Kamba a Christian missionary, many of whom had penetrated about that period into Tartary. The premature death of the master left incomplete the instruction of the disciple, who, failing to attain Christianity, stopped short as a reformer of Bhuddism.

After the service we had some talk with the lamas, who were pleased to see us, and treated us with every civility. They all speak, and many of them write, Chinese ; and in that language we communicated with them. The ethnical difference between two races supposed to be of the same origin could not be more apparent than in the case of these Mongols and the Chinese by whom they were surrounded. The Mongols have all an unintellectual cast of countenance, low narrow foreheads, and a simple and open expression. Their features are not very different from the Chinese. They have the high cheek-bones, small eyes, and some other characteristics of their neighbours ; but their noses are on the whole not so short and flat, nor their faces so rounded. It is not so easy to tell in what the difference between them and the Chinese consists, but the distinction is so marked that I hardly believe it possible for

any one to mistake a Mongol for a Chinese. The Mongols have unsuspecting honesty written on their faces. The Chinese, from north to south, bear the stamp of craft and cunning, and are much superior in intellect to the Mongols. It is only necessary to remark the physiognomies of the two races to understand how the Chinese outwit the Mongols in their dealings with them, and how the Chinese name has in consequence become a bye-word among the Mongols for everything that is detestable. It should not be forgotten of course that it is probably the worst class of Chinese with whom the Mongols come in contact. They are mostly adventurers who seek their fortunes among the Tartars, for the hard life they are compelled to live in these outlying countries is not at all suitable to the Chinese taste. The better sort of merchants are therefore not likely to wander so far; and those that do go are in the first instance below the average moral standard of the Chinese, and, when liberated from the restraint of public opinion in their own country, they are likely to deteriorate still more. It would also appear to be true that demoralisation naturally grows out of the intercourse between two races, one of whom is in a marked degree inferior to the other in intellectual capacity. In commercial dealings the Chinese find it so easy to overreach the simple Mongols, and the temptation to do so is so strong, that the habit is engendered, which soon becomes part of the character of the Chinese in Tartary. The Mongols, on their part, learn to form a low estimate of the honour of human nature. They know they are victimised by the Chinese, but they are powerless to escape from it; hence they, by a very natural process, acquire a settled hatred to the whole race.

But we have not yet seen the great gilt image of Bhudda, which stands in a separate building erected for the purpose. We failed in getting in on the first visit, but afterwards





TIBETIAN MONUMENT IN LAMA TEMPLE. PEKING.

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succeeded. The image is seventy-two feet high, well formed, and symmetrically proportioned. By a series of narrow and steep staircases we ascend several stories, at each getting a view of a part of the image. At the top of all we get out on a balcony, from which a good view of the city and environs is obtained.

The Grand Lāma of this monastery is a Chaberon or living Bhudda, of whom there are several in Mongolia; and as such he is a sacred person, and a man of great authority among Mongols, whether lamas or laymen. We had business to transact with this incarnation of Bhudda, but, on inquiring for him, we learned that he had left on some holy mission to the great lamasery at Dolonor, a Mongol town a few days' journey north-west of Peking. We had a letter from the head priest of the Fang-wang temple at Tungchow, who, though not belonging to the Lama sect, which so far as I am aware consists exclusively of Tartars, was nevertheless on easy terms with the Grand Lama. The purport of the letter was to recommend us to the attentions of the Grand Lama, and to request him to give us another letter to the lamas of a monastery in Mongolia, a short distance beyond the Great Wall at Ch'ian kia-kow, to enlist their services in procuring camels for our journey across the desert of Gobi. We anticipated some difficulty about this, and wished to have as many strings to our bow as possible. The letter was written in Mongol and put in an envelope addressed in Manchu, for the priest at Tung-chow was a learned man. No one in the monastic brotherhood could be found who could read the Manchu address, and they had great difficulty in finding one who could master the Mongol characters in which the letter itself was written. We were surprised that they should not be able to read their own language, and on inquiry found that lamas are not taught to read Mongol as a necessary branch of study. They all

learn the Lama writing, which they call "Tangut," but which must be Thibetian, as all their books and prayers are written in that character, and those lamas who live in Peking generally learn to read a little Chinese for their own convenience. While the letter was being deciphered we were introduced to the lay brother of the monastery, the confidant of the Grand Lama, and factotum in all secular affairs. A fine, hard-headed, swarthy complexioned, rough-and-ready burly fellow he was, and he received us with his rude native hospitality, showing us into the room, and making us sit on the very *kang* used by the absent Bhudda. Being naturally slow of comprehension, and his secretary being equally slow and uncertain in deciphering the missive, the old fellow had many questions and cross-questions to ask, with many repetitions, which all being carried on in a very loud tone of voice, as if he had been bawling to a man on the main-top, began to get rather tiresome. Having satisfied himself about the contents of the letter, he entered into conversation with Noetzli, who, having been in Mongolia before, and in the very monastery of Bain-tolochoi to which we sought to be accredited, very adroitly led the conversation to that subject, and soon showed our Mongol friend that he knew all about the locality and the personal appearance of the head Lama there, whose chief characteristic seemed to be that he was inordinately fat. No sooner had our friend convinced himself that Noetzli had actually been the guest of the fat Lama, than he took us yet closer into his confidence, ordered the letter to be written, and at the same time despatched a boy into the street with some money in his hand. When the letter was finished, and we rose to leave, the old fellow, on hospitable thoughts intent, protested, seized our hats, and by main force pushed us back to the seat of the Grand Lama. To keep us in play he put fruit before us, but we did not know what it was all about

until our breakfast was brought in in a large basin. It consisted of about twenty pounds of plain boiled mutton, without bread, rice, potatoes, or vegetables of any kind. All we had to eat with it was a solution of salt, soy, vinegar, and sugar. Eat we must, there was no help for it, and we honestly set ourselves to do as full justice to the unsavoury meal as we were capable of, although we had a good breakfast waiting us at home, that is, at our restaurant, our host all the while standing over us like a taskmaster to keep us up to our work. When no entreaties would make us eat more, with looks and expressions of pitying regret, our uncouth friend showed us how Mongols eat mutton by taking out a good-sized piece with his fingers, and dropping it down his throat. Then turning to the youngsters who crowded the room he pitched lumps of mutton to each of them, who, in like manner, gobbled it like hungry eagles. Our reception at the Lama temple gave us a fair idea of Mongol hospitality and habits, and impressed us favourably with the former. A long ride through the dirty streets of Peking, in a hot sun, was the least agreeable part of our morning's work.

The old Observatory on the Wall is interesting as a monument of the early astronomical tastes of the Chinese emperors, and of the ingenuity of the Jesuits. It was first erected by the Ming before the Jesuits came to China, or, at all events, before they began to be influential, and afterwards greatly enlarged and improved under the auspices of the Jesuits. There is even an old instrument cast out and lying dishonoured in the grass—an orrery, if I rightly remember, dating from the Mongol dynasty, 600 years old. It is probable that the Chinese or Mongols were then in advance of European nations in their knowledge of celestial phenomena. The great celestial globe made under the direction of Verbiest, is a superb casting in bronze, and although the instrument sent from Paris is the finest in the Observatory, Father

Verbiest's celestial globe was the most interesting to me as a specimen of what a clever man can do under almost insuperable difficulties. Since the fall of the Jesuits little attention seems to have been paid to, or use made of, the Observatory, and the teaching of those talented men is well nigh lost.

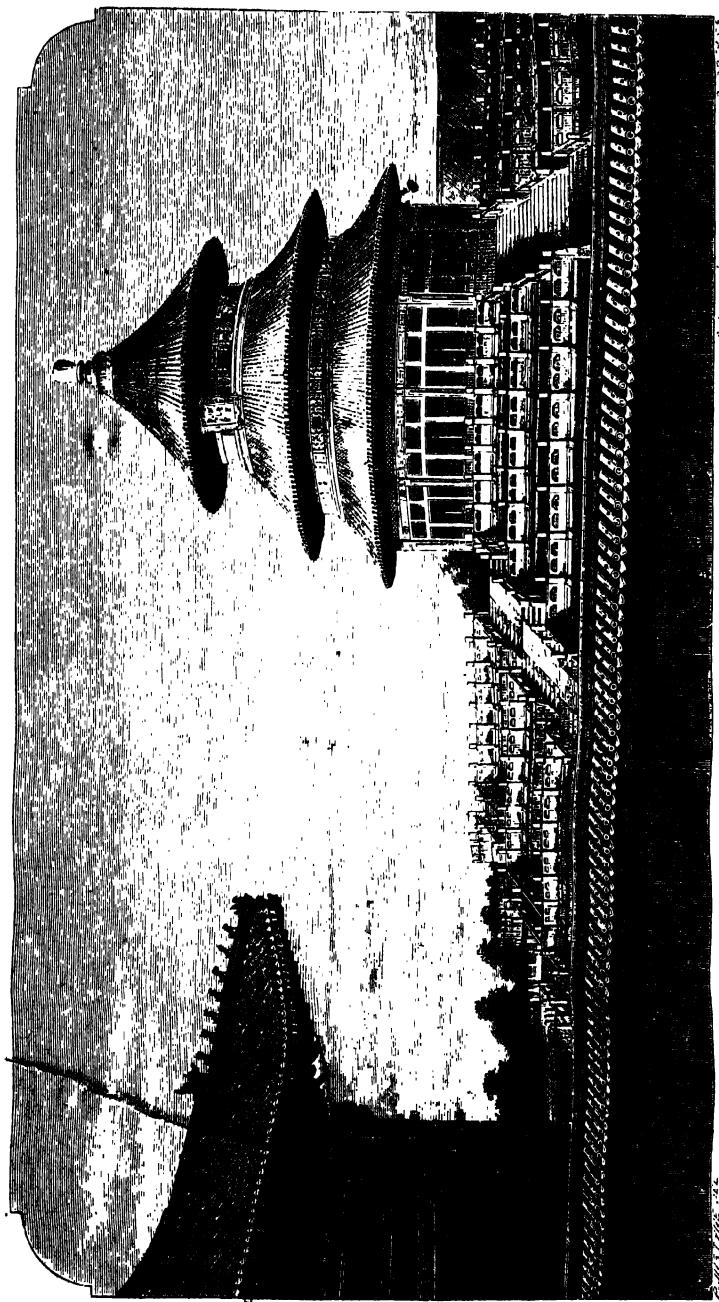
The Temple of Heaven, or, as some people call it, the Altar of Heaven, is situated near the south wall of the city. We had several miles to go to it from our residence, in a direct line south, along the main street from the centre gate between the Tartar and Chinese cities. The street is wide and straight, but very dirty, and blocked up with trumpery stalls of all sorts, and kept alive by the incessant shouts of boys and old women. "Apples! fine apples, to be sold cheap, —those who have no money can't have any," reminded us of the pathetic story of "Simple Simon." Jugglers also disported themselves in the street and attracted good audiences to witness the swallowing and disgorging of huge stones, feats of strength, and other miracles. The poor juggler does not seem to take much by his motions, however, for, after swallowing an intolerable quantity of stone, and throwing up large bricks, and allowing them to break themselves on his head, thereby creating baldness on the crown, and otherwise amusing a distinguished circle of spectators for twenty minutes, he mildly solicits "cash," and has a wretched pittance thrown into the ring, much as one would throw a bone to a dog. I could not help wishing him some more useful outlet for his talents. Another man would stand with a white painted board in his hand, slightly covered with ink in a half-liquid state, and, while conversing with the crowd, he would, by means of his thumb and fingers, throw off such excellent representations of fishes, birds, &c., with every fin, scale, and feather done to the life, as one never sees in the most highly finished Chinese paintings. The talent displayed

by these peripatetic artists proves conclusively that the Chinese do possess the skill to draw after nature. Then why don't they do it? A question more easily asked than answered. But we are supposed to be on the road to the Temple of Heaven. After walking two miles or so down this great street, we suddenly come to a break in the houses. There is no more street, but a large open space before us, lying very low, the road being continued on a raised causeway, on the same level as the street we have left. This space was originally a parade-ground. It is now a mud-puddle, cut up in all directions by innumerable cart-ruts, and most unsightly to behold. But the Temple of Heaven itself is now in sight, the outer wall stretching from a point abreast of us on the left to the south gate of the city, which is dimly visible in the distance over the misnamed parade-ground. The great centre pavilion, with its blue roof and large gilt top, resplendent in the afternoon sun, shoots up into the air, the most conspicuous object to be seen in all Peking. The outer wall alluded to encloses a square mile of ground. Opposite to the Temple of Heaven, and on our right, is the Temple or Altar of the Earth, where the emperors of China repair according to traditional custom on the first day of spring to inaugurate the happy season by ploughing the first furrow. The little boy who now wields the sceptres of the khans must be too young to hold a plough, and I suppose he does it by commission, if indeed he is not too degenerate to do it at all.

Entering the outer gate of the Temple of Heaven, we are ushered into a large park, beautifully laid out with avenues of trees, and with regular well-paved walks. The whole place is terribly overgrown with long grass, and the neatly paved walks are all but obliterated by the same. As we proceed we come to a number of rather fine buildings for the accommodation of the priests. We saw none of these gentry,

however, and the outer gate is kept by a dirty coolie, who takes a fee for opening it. The great pavilion stands on the top of a high causeway, the best part of a mile long, with flights of steps leading up to it at various parts. The causeway is beautifully paved with square-stones, so regular and well fitted that the joinings can be traced in straight parallel lines along the whole length, except where the line of sight is intercepted by rank grass shooting up through them. The altar is in the great pavilion, which is a circular building of three storys, each story having wide eaves projecting over it, all covered with bright blue enamelled tiles. The roof of the building is of the same material, and is rather a sharply-pitched cone surmounted by a large round gilt ball. The whole effect is bright and beautiful. The pavilion is ascended from the causeway by flights of white marble steps, and a promenade of the same material runs all round it. On the causeway, and at some distance from the altar, are large massive arches with gates in them, and beyond the arches, at a great distance, there is another pavilion of similar construction to the principal one, but much smaller, being only one story high, where the Emperor comes once a-year to worship the true God, or, as some call it, the Dragon. Be that as it may, however, this is doubtless the purest form of worship known to the Chinese. When the Emperor takes his place in the small pavilion the gates of the arches are thrown open, and through them he can see afar off the altar of Heaven, or the Dragon throne, as you may please to call it. Sacrifices are made on those occasions; a large house or temple is set apart for the slaughter of the animals, and another circular tower of green bricks stands near it, where the remains of the sacrifices are buried. The whole plan of this splendid monument is nobly conceived, and would do credit to the most advanced nation in the world. Unhappily, it seems now to be utterly uncared for. The pavements on





From a photograph by Berto.

GREAT TEMPLE OF HEAVEN. PEKING.

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which so much care, labour, and money have been expended, are being rapidly covered up with grass. The avenues are like a wilderness, and weeds are even taking root in the beautiful blue-tiled roofs, which, if not soon ruined by it, will at all events be twisted out of their symmetrical proportions. It is melancholy to see that what men of large and enlightened ideas have been at such pains to build, the present degenerate race do not consider it worth while to hire half-a-dozen coolies to keep in order. No further proof is necessary of the state of imbecility into which the Chinese rulers have fallen than this, that in their own city they should allow such a monument of the active energy of their ancestors to go to wreck and ruin for want of a little looking after. I do not see how good government can be looked for in the distant provinces when the body politic is so rotten at the core.

My opportunities did not allow of my seeing more of the great sights of Peking, but we have not yet done the theatres. It was, of course, necessary to patronise some of these establishments, and they afford great facilities for admitting people whose time is not all their own. Ours certainly was our own, but we had let it out for other purposes, and could only steal an hour now and then to give up to this enjoyment. The theatres are open all day long, and all night, too, for anything I know. The acting goes on incessantly—one piece following another without interruption. The favourite pieces with the actors, and by a natural inference with the audience, are old historical heroic pieces, which are performed in a wretched falsetto sing-song voice, and accompanied by the most die-away pantomimic gestures, even in the chief male characters, painfully monotonous to European ears and eyes. They are heavy and slow, but afford great scope for the display of *outré* costumes, overlaid with fiery dragons and hideous forms, which delight the eye

of the Chinese. The theatres at Peking are certainly superior, both in the get-up and acting, to anything else of the kind I have seen in China, and some comic pieces we saw were so admirably acted that we, knowing scarcely a word, could follow the story throughout. The houses were always crowded, and the audience seemed to take more interest in the performance than is usual in the south of China, no doubt owing to the language used being the Peking dialect, which is but indifferently understood by provincial audiences. On our entrance to a theatre we were always civilly greeted by the officers, and shown up to the most eligible places in the galleries, where we met people from all parts of the country, not excepting swell Cantonese, all dressed in spotless white muslin, as light and airy as if made from the gossamer's web. We were at once beset by half-naked peripatetic vendors of fruits, cakes, and comfits, and even cups of hot tea. The tea was very refreshing in such a hot place, but our neighbours insisted on giving us little dumplings and other Chinese delicacies, whose component parts we could not even guess. It was useless refusing—that was regarded as mock-modesty. We could only take a quiet opportunity of depositing the suspicious viands in our pockets, and give them to the first dirty urchin we met in the street. The Chinese themselves go on crunching ground nuts, melon-seeds, and rubbish of that sort, the whole time.

Women do not act in China except under very exceptional circumstances. The female part is acted by men, who, thanks to their naturally effeminate appearance, make up very well as women, and the squeaky voice which they practise helps them out. Actors are by no means held in high repute in China, and they are in general very ill paid. One of the best actors, who was also highly esteemed as a singer, this is a squeaker lodged at our hotel, and he informed

us that he earned on an average about half a dollar a day.

Our lodging being in the Chinese city, was far removed from the European residents, who all live in the Tartar quarter, and the gate between the two is closed at sunset. We therefore saw less of our respective countrymen than we might otherwise have done. The foreign community in Peking is but small, and foreign trade being interdicted in the capital, is not likely to be very much increased. There are the Russian, English, French, American, and I suppose now the Prussian legations, all well quartered in commodious official buildings. The Russian is the smallest, because the oldest. At the time of its establishment it was a great thing to have a place at all, without quarrelling about the size of it. The head of the foreign custom-house lives in Peking, and there are a few student interpreters attached to him, who are in training for the custom-house service. Two Church missionaries also reside in Peking, and last, not least, Dr. Lockhart, who has established a medical mission under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, on the plan of the one he for many years successfully conducted in Shanghai. Whatever may have been the past success of medical missions as an indirect means of introducing Christianity into China, there can hardly be a doubt that they are of all methods the best calculated to attain the objects for which they have been organised. The Chinese are pre-eminently irreligious, I mean with reference to their own nominal creed—Buddhism. They are too keenly intent on minding their worldly affairs to have any thought to spare for higher considerations. They are entirely free from the fanaticism which animates other pagan races. Their temples and priesthood are universally despised and neglected. The only semblance of religious observances practised by the bulk of the people, is a very low kind of superstition, and that sits

lightly on them as a rule wherever dollars stand in the way. It is not unfair to say that they are devoid of the religious faculty, and are "sunk in material interests." Hence, the didactic inculcation of strange doctrines is foolishness to them who are indifferent to any doctrine whatever. Of course I only speak from a secular point of view, without forgetting that the most impossible things are easy to the Omnipotent; and he would be a bold man who would venture to circumscribe the possible results that the future may develop from the dissemination of the Bible among a reading, and on the whole not an unthinking people. But the medical missionary presents Christianity in its most attractive phase, that is, associated with a noble philanthropy, after the example of the Founder of our religion, who always accompanied his teaching with healing the sick. And there is perhaps no form of mere philanthropy so powerful to exact gratitude from the most unlikely objects, as that of alleviating pain. The Chinese are probably more open to this mode of reaching their hearts than to any other. In my rambles in out-of-the-way places in China, I have frequently been appealed to for medical aid by poor people who had heard of the repute of foreign doctors, both for skill and benevolence. And although the Chinese character is the most hopeless one to expect gratitude from, still I affirm that if anything can touch them with the sense of an obligation, it is the ministering to their fleshly infirmities; and in the case of medical missions, they cannot escape the connection between them and the religion that prompts them. But I fear I am getting into too deep waters.

No difficulty was experienced in getting our passports, although it was intimated to Sir F. Bruce that the passport for Mongolia was not exactly a thing which could be demanded under the treaty, and therefore that the issue of such a document might at any time be refused by the Chinese authorities

without infringing any of the treaty stipulations, the argument being, that Mongolia, though tributary to China, is not a part of the Chinese empire, in the treaty interpretation of the word. This is fudge, of course, but as long as they grant the passports, all right. When they refuse, it will be time to argue about it. They are no doubt a little jealous about foreigners poking about in Mongolia: their own hold on it is so uncertain, and the encroachments of the Russians so gigantic of late years in other quarters, that is, in Manchuria, that the Chinese government, who now, if never before, feels its own decrepitude, does not know which way to turn for security against aggression. As usual with them, they, in their blindness to their own best interests, do just the wrong thing. Two schemes for telegraphic communication from Europe through Mongolia have been proposed to them, both from English sources: both have been rejected, from the general and ignorant dread they have of foreigners establishing stations in Mongolia. Now were their eyes opened they must see that it is not from England or France they have anything to fear of aggression in that part of their dominions; but from Russia alone. But were English or French subjects to settle, for any purpose whatever, in the Mongolian steppes, under authority from the Chinese government, no better guarantee could be secured against Russian aggression. As it now stands, the Russians are left alone in the field. When *they* really want to have telegraphic stations in Mongolia they *will not* be refused, and before many years are over a large slice of Mongolia will be Russian. The Russians have certain winning ways of their own, altogether foreign to our system of diplomatic procedure, of getting what they want from the Chinese. While we are spending millions in sending armies to fight the Chinese, for questions which are as much or more for their own interests as for ours, and then as conquerors astonishing the Chinese by the moderation of our demands,

the Russians are in the most amicable manner possible pushing forward their frontiers, and slicing off a thousand miles of Chinese coast, all the while maintaining their position as friendly allies of the Chinese, in contradistinction to the English barbarians, who are always blustering and fighting, in utter defiance of the rules of courtesy. After all it may be as well so. Our interest as a commercial people is to develop the resources of the world. The Russians will certainly do this better than the Chinese in those wild northern regions; at all events, a desert on the one hand, and a wilderness on the other, cannot be made much less productive than they are. But the Chinese cannot be expected to view the matter in this light, and yet they are so infatuated as to nurse the snake in their bosom to the exclusion of others who would be likely to checkmate his designs. The Russian government has shown a strange *penchant* for annexing vast deserts to its dominions. Much may it make out of them; but if half the enterprise and money had been expended in improving the condition of the enormous territory it already possesses, the Russian empire would have been too powerful for all Europe. But that is their own affair.

The last thing to be done in Peking was to settle our bills at the hotel (!) and restaurant, and exorbitant enough they were. On asking the proprietor of the hotel for his account, he replied, "Oh! pay what you like." "In that case," said we, "we like to pay nothing." "All right, as you please," with the most lofty indifference, answered our host. Driven almost wild by his coolness, we tendered about six times what we should have paid for better entertainment anywhere else. The wretch turned up his nose at it with a supercilious air that nearly roared the British lion. The restaurant was as unconscionable in its demands, but we had something substantial for our money there, and did not so much object;



but to pay through the nose for a corner to sleep in, which no gentleman would think fit for his hounds, did go sorely against the grain. I cannot imagine what makes things so dear in Peking, nor do I believe they are so dear to the initiated. One thing is cheap, and that is *ice*, and the most refreshing sight we saw during our stay in the capital, was the cartloads of the precious commodity being carried about in large square blocks; and how did we pity our friends whom we had left in Shanghai, sweltering through the worst part of the summer without this luxury—I ought to say necessary—in such a climate. No care is taken of ice in Peking. It is collected and thrown into large pits, and may melt as much as it likes. If there was any chance of its falling short, it would simply be a question of a few thousand tons more to be thrown into the heap in the winter.

The local bank-notes in Peking are a great convenience. They are issued in amounts from 1000 cash (about a dollar) and upwards, and are in universal use in the city. The use of them saves the natives from lugging about huge strings of copper cash, the only coinage of China, 50 lbs. weight of which are worth about sixty shillings. These notes are not current outside the city walls, however, and here is an inconvenience; for whatever cash balance you may have in that medium must be paid away for something or other before you leave. It would be possible to change them for copper cash or Sycee silver, but that would involve delay and perhaps trouble.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PEKING TO CHAN-KIA-KOW.

ON the 14th of August, having arranged all our affairs in Peking, we set out for Tung-chow, where we had left the priests to provide us transport to Chan-kia-kow. Disappointment awaited us—nothing was done. We were very angry, and a hot discussion ensued between us and the head priest, but we could make neither rhyme nor reason out of him. Here was a dilemma. Ought we to wait till the morrow, and try ourselves to hire beasts of burden at Tung-chow, with this shaven head probably plotting against us? Or ought we to start by break of day with our whole baggage to Peking, and trust to arranging matters there? To do that even, we were helpless, unless the priests were on our side. We resolved, therefore, to conciliate the monk. At this juncture M. Noetzli, who had kindly volunteered to accompany us so far, being acquainted with the ways of the road, addressed the priest in Russian. The effect was marked and instantaneous—the priest's countenance changed—he opened himself out—explained the true causes why he had not been able to get the mules, and suggested that we should get carts to take our baggage to Peking the next day. He would accompany us himself, and help us to negotiate for transport in Peking. That settled, we felt relieved, and ate our frugal dinner in peace and comfort.

I must explain the wonderful effect produced by the use of the Russian language. I have already intimated that this

Fang-wang temple has been constantly used by the Russians as a dépôt. Intimate relations have grown up between the Russians and the priests, and mutual confidence and kindness has been the result. Several of the priests have learnt the Russian language in their frequent intercourse with the Russians. The priests know no other foreigners. On our own merits we could do nothing with them ; but the moment a connecting link seemed to be shown between us and the Russians, we were regarded as belonging to a privileged class.

Next morning, we were again on the road to Peking, bag and baggage. We rode, Noetzli on a mule, which was quiet and tractable enough till a straw touched his tail, when he bounded off, kicking and jumping, floundered in a rut, pitched Noetzli over his head, then tenderly kicked him. *Memo.*—Never ride a mule if you can help it, they are uncouth, unmanageable brutes.

Our late landlord in Peking greeted us obsequiously on our return, and our old friends at the restaurant were no less delighted that their newly acquired art of cooking mutton chops was again in requisition.

Our clerical friend soon appeared with a large, old-fashioned, blue cotton umbrella. We at once went with him to a shop where mules and litters were to be hired, and after the preliminary salutations and cups of tea, we asked for mules, and were told off-hand that they had none. This we knew to be untrue, because we had seen them. We tried several others, but met with the same reply. This looked hopeful, indeed, and it seemed there was nothing left for us that day, but to go to the theatre, where we saw some good acting and an audience thoroughly enjoying it ; and so we drowned our own troubles for a time. The next expedient was to order as good a dinner as our ingenuity could devise, out of the materials at hand. A good dinner is a wonderful

soother, and has been, perhaps, too much overlooked by philosophers.

The next day, 16th of August, our priest, worn out in our service, came and reported himself sick. He had feverish symptoms, for which we administered quinine.

This break-down of our mainstay was unfortunate, for as we could not get on with his assistance, how could we manage without it? The mule-proprietors still maintained in the morning that there were no mules to be had; but at mid-day they sent to say we could have as many as we liked, at slightly exorbitant prices. We thereupon engaged eight pack-mules at four taels\* each, and three mule-litters at eight taels each, to convey us and our belongings to Chan-kia-kow, distant about 400 li, or a four days' journey. It is difficult to divine why it was that these crafty dealers so obstinately maintained the non-existence of the mules. They refused even to listen to an offer on the first day. They were prepared to demand an extortionate price, and we were equally prepared to pay it, but they determined to play with us a little, in order to work our feelings up to the requisite pitch. And when they had reduced us to despair, they thought we would be in a proper frame of mind to accede to their demands, however extravagant they might be. But now everything was satisfactorily arranged, and the mules were to be sent to us early in the morning. The fare amounted to sixty taels in all, of which we paid one-third on the signing of the contract, one-third when the mules were loaded, and the balance on arrival at Chan-kia-kow.

My ma-foo now made himself very busy. Up to this time he had done little but entertain me with cock-and-bull stories about his late master, and his reasons for leaving his service, at every favourable opportunity appealing to me for

\* 1 tael equal to 6s. 6d.





PART OF THE EMPEROR'S PALACE, YUEN-MIN-YUEN.  
DESTROYED 1860.

my opinion, as to whether he was a "good man." I always answered in the negative, but he solaced himself with the reflection that I would find him out and do him justice when we got to Chan-kia-kow. Now that we were about starting, we thought of many little things we wanted for our comfort on the journey, and who so eligible to make the purchases as "ma-foo." His eagle eye discerned in this a fine scope for his energies, for nothing tickles a Chinaman so much as to have money passing through his hands. "Ma-foo" set to work manfully, and was proceeding very satisfactorily to all parties, bringing the articles we wanted, and rendering an account of the prices paid, until he brought me a coarse cotton bag, which he put in at two dollars. "No," I said, "I won't have it at that price. Take it back to the shop." By and by, he re-appeared with the bag, and offered it for a dollar and a-half. I refused it; and sent him back to the shop. After a while, he returned to the charge with the wretched bag: told me he could not take it back, but reduced his demand to one dollar. I asked him how he could afford to sell it for one dollar, seeing he had paid two for it. "Maskee—you take it." I saw he was "stuck" with it, and that if he failed to realise, he would be under the necessity of stealing something from me to make up for his loss. I therefore accepted it—not without making him confess that he had paid only one dollar for the bag. It was now my turn to ask him where his vaunted goodness was, seeing he tried to cheat me of a dollar. He only grinned, and said, in this instance he was a "little" bad. He was but an inexperienced knave. A clever Chinaman, that is, an ordinary average Chinaman, would have managed an affair of that kind so adroitly as to defy suspicion, except the general feeling one always experiences that all Chinamen are rogues. But small peculations are considered by the Chinese as their legitimate game. When they are intrusted with commis-

sions, they look on it as a sacred duty to scrape as much as they can out of the affair for themselves. This runs through the whole race, and every grade of society, from the highest official in the empire to the meanest beggar.

In case these remarks should be taken to contain a general sweeping charge of dishonesty against the whole Chinese race, I must explain myself a little more fully. The system of peculation is recognised in China, as a legitimate source of emolument; and within certain limits, arbitrarily fixed by custom, it is not held to be inconsistent with honesty. The government connive at it to an alarming extent, by paying responsible officers mere nominal salaries, leaving it to their own ingenuity to improve their fortunes. But with all that, it is a rare thing for a Chinaman to betray a trust; the best proof of which is that they are trusted, under the slenderest of guarantees, with large sums of money. Among the respectable class of merchants, their word is as good as their bond. A bargain once concluded is unflinchingly adhered to. Their slipperiness is exhausted in the preliminary negotiations. Their "cheating" is conducted on certain broad and well understood principles. But for practical honesty, the Chinese may well excite the admiration of many who think themselves vastly superior. When we were at war with the Viceroy of Canton, the European factories were burnt, and foreigners compelled to abandon the place, leaving a great deal of property in the hands of Chinese merchants. Repudiation never occurred to these Chinamen's minds. On the contrary, they found their way to Hong-kong, during the blockade of the Canton river, for the purpose of settling accounts with the foreigners. China contains good and bad in about the same proportion as other countries. Old John Bell says of them:—"They are honest, and observe the strictest honour and justice in their dealings. It must, however, be acknowledged, that not a few of them are much



addicted to knavery, and well skilled in the art of cheating. They have, indeed, found many Europeans as great proficient in that art as themselves." A very fair summary of Chinese character.

Bright and early in the morning the mules and litters came, and we were three hours at work, loading and arranging everything. It required a good deal of management, as the loads are not lashed on the mules' backs, but balanced, so that they must be pretty equally divided on each side of the pack-saddle.

We had somehow nine mules instead of eight. We had under 3000 lbs. weight of baggage to carry. That did not give a full load to each mule, for they are reputed to carry 300 catties, or 400 lbs. each. The loads of our team averaged 325 lbs.

The mule litter, used in the north of China, is a large palanquin suspended on the backs of two mules, length-wise. Strong leather bands connect the points of the shafts, resting on the saddles of the respective mules. An iron pin, fixed in the top of the saddle, passes through a hole in the leather, and so keeps it in its place. The shafts are, of course, a good length, to reach from one mule to the other, and to leave the animals plenty of room to walk. There is, consequently, a good deal of spring in the machine. The motion is not at all disagreeable; compared with a cart, it is luxurious. There is hardly room in the palanquin to stretch out full length, but in other respects it is very commodious, having room in the bottom for a good quantity of baggage.

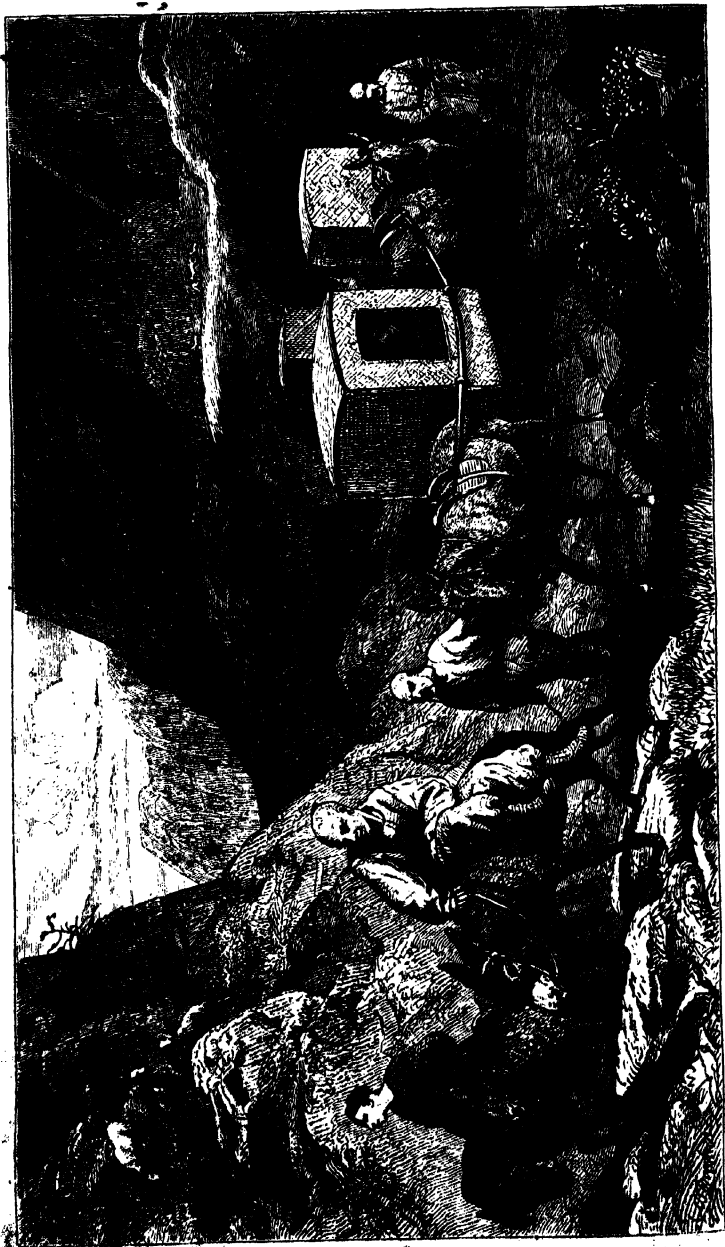
About 10 o'clock on the 17th August our caravan moved slowly out of the courtyard of the inn, which we left with no regret, and we slowly felt our way through the dusty, crowded streets of Peking towards the North Gate, which was our exit from the city. I was on horseback, intending to get into my litter should the sun prove too powerful, which it did

when we got to the sandy plain a little way outside the city. The slow pace of the mules was most disheartening, but I had yet to learn much patience in travelling.

Our first resting-place was at Sha-ho, a village sixty li or twenty miles from Peking. Here we made ourselves a dinner, and fed the cattle. There are two very fine old stone bridges at Sha-ho, but the river that runs under them is only a ditch now. It was drawing late in the afternoon before we were on the road again, and we had not gone many miles before darkness came. The country is well cultivated with cereals, the chief crop being Barbadoes millet, standing from ten to fifteen feet high. Strips of cotton plants appear here and there. It is a delicate-looking plant in this part of the country. The last five miles of the road to Nankow is very rough and stony, and as the night was dark when we passed it, our animals had great difficulty in keeping their legs. About 11 p.m. we arrived at the inn at Nankow, and created a scene of no small confusion by our entry into the courtyard. It was already filled with travellers' gear of all sorts, and it was long before we could pick out a clear space to unload our mules. The fitful glimmer of the dimmest of all lanterns helped to make the darkness visible, but did not assist us in clearing the heels of horses, mules, and donkeys that were straggling all over the place. In the midst of the Babel of tongues, and the senseless yells of our fellow-travellers, as they one after another awoke in a nightmare, we were fain to retreat to our dormitory, and with a scant supper, lay down to rest hoping to find everything in its place in the morning.

The village of Nankow is at the entrance of the mountain pass of that name. It is for this pass alone that the mule-litters are necessary, for it would be impossible to take any wheeled carriage through. In a Russian sketch of the route from Peking to Kiachta, it is stated that the





road is passable for carriages throughout. There are several very difficult rocky passes on the road, but this one at Nankow is, I am certain, impracticable for carriages.

On the 18th August, early in the morning, we entered the defile. It is indeed a terrible road, over huge boulders of rock. The pass is about thirteen miles in length, and for the greater part of that distance nothing breaks the monotony of the precipitous mountain wall on either side. The remains of several old forts are seen in the pass, showing the importance that has been attached to it in former times. It certainly is the key of the position, and the last step of an invader towards Peking. But it is so well defended by nature, that a handful of men could keep an army at bay, if any were so bold as to attempt to force this thirteen miles of defile. The care bestowed on the defences hereabouts shows the terror inspired by the Mongols and other outer tribes in the hearts of the rulers of China.

Our mules struggled gallantly with their loads, slipping and tripping at every step, and landed us at the outside of the pass, without accident of any kind, but not without a good deal of wear and tear of hoof. They even kept up almost their full travelling pace of three miles an hour. At the northern exit from the pass a branch of one of the inner "Great Walls" crosses. It is out of repair, but still the archway over the port is good, and it would puzzle anyone to get in or out of the pass without going through the gate.

At a small walled town, called Cha-tow, just clear of the pass, we halted for our mid-day meal, at a very good inn. The inns hereabouts are nearly all kept by Mahommedans, called in Chinese "Hwuy-Hwuy." The modicum of extraneous civilisation they have acquired, through the religion of the Prophet, is sufficient to mark them as more intelligent and enterprising than their fellows. It is not likely that

their tenets are very strictly kept, but they are sufficiently so to enable the Mohanmedans to keep together, and form communities and associations of their own. Mine host at Cha-tow asked me for some wine, on which I read him a lecture on the duty of abstinence inculcated by the Prophet. He admitted this was so, but said they were not over strait-laced in those parts. The Mohammedans have their mosques at Tientsin, Peking, and in most large cities in the north and west of China. They are evidently left unmolested in the exercise of their religion, and enjoy every social privilege. The Chinese government is really very tolerant of all religious opinions, and the Chinese as a race are so supremely indifferent to religious matters, that they are the last people in the world who would be likely to work themselves up to fanatical persecution. They are all too busy to attend to such matters. The Chinese government has, no doubt, shown itself jealous of the propagation of the Christian religion, but it is its political tendencies only that frighten them. They have a wholesome recollection of the ambitious projects of the Jesuits in their day of influence,\* and they have been constantly kept in hot-water by the Propaganda. They have to meet ever-recurrent demands by the self-constituted champion of religion in the East, for the murder of some French or Italian priest in some unheard-of part of the country, where he had no right to be, except at his own proper peril. They see in every native convert a contingent *casus belli* with some powerful state, and very naturally seek to check the spread of such dangerous doctrines by all indirect means. This unfortunate mixing-up of politics with religion has been a deadly blow to the real advancement of Christianity in China. And the abuse of the Christian vocabulary by the Taeping rebels is not calculated to prepossess the Chinese

\* Father Gerbillon, a Jesuit, was the Chinese plenipotentiary who concluded the treaty of Nerchinsk with the Russians, in 1689.

authorities in favour of the Western faith. Japan is another country where the government, and I may say also the people, are utterly indifferent to religion, but where the Christian religion has been, and is, tabooed with a vigour unsurpassed in the history of the world. And who that has read the story of the introduction of Christianity into that country by the Jesuits, can blame the government of Japan for its arbitrary exercise of power?

Huc laments the low status of the Chinese Christians, as compared with the Mussulmen, and attributes it to the want of self-assertion. When a Christian gets into trouble his brethren hide themselves. Huc would have driven them to the other extreme. He advocated strong associations by which the Christians might "awe" the Mandarins, as if there must necessarily be antagonism between the two. The inference from which must be either that the Christians are systematically persecuted, as such, or that they are in the habit of committing offences against society. The Chinese government and people have a horror of secret societies and of any political associations whatever. But if Huc's converts had been content to live like ordinary good citizens, neither shrinking from nor courting publicity, they would probably have disarmed suspicion and escaped molestation. Above all, if Huc and his clerical brethren could have divested themselves of the character of spies who had crept into China in defiance of the law of the land, for purposes which the government could not understand, and therefore assumed to be pernicious, they might have saved their disciples from some annoyance, or, as they love to call it, persecution.

In the inn at Chatow, and in all the other inns north of Peking, we found a large cauldron of boiling mutton in a central position in the kitchen. This is kept boiling from morning till night; and the broth, which, by itself, is

by no means unpalatable, is always handy as a stock for any messes the wayfarers may fancy. A youth spends his time in kneading chow-patties, which he does very skilfully and rapidly. These are torn and thrown in pieces into the boiling mass, and, when sufficiently done, are served out with a due proportion of broth, as a savoury dish for a hungry man. The "steward of the cauldron," as Huc would probably have called him, has acquired great expertness in serving out his stuff. With a variety of ladles, all sieves, more or less fine, he will serve up either the plain broth, or nimbly seize any of the morsels that are tumbling about in confusion in the pot.

Mutton is cheap and abundant here, and is the staple article of food. The sheep are pastured on many hill-sides that are not fit for anything else, and the constant droves of sheep that come in from Mongolia, for the supply of Peking, pass along this road, and are no doubt to be had cheap.

We now enter a plain about ten miles broad, bounded on either side by bold mountain ranges running east and west. We cross the plain obliquely towards the northern mountain chain. This plain must be elevated more than 1000 feet. The air was fresher than about Peking, and a very marked difference was apparent in the fertility of the soil. The millet and other crops were stunted, the soil was arid and rather stony. The hills are quite bare, but a few trees are dotted over the plain.

At Hwai-lai-hien, a good-sized walled town, we halted for the night. Outside the city is a very large stone bridge, evidently of the same period as those at Sha-ho. Five gothic-shaped arches are still standing, and another is detached at a distance of some 200 feet, the intermediate part of the bridge having no doubt been destroyed. There is no water now in the river, but the bed is still well marked, and



the old embankments remain, about 500 or 600 yards apart. The old bed of the river is in a high state of cultivation now.

I find the following notice of this bridge and this river in Bell's Travels. He does not, indeed, give the name of the town, but, tracing up his march from stage to stage, between the Great Wall and Peking, it is evident that Hwai-lai is the station referred to. He says: "About noon, next day, we came to a large, populous, and well-built city, with broad streets, as straight as a line. Near this place runs a fine river, which appears navigable, having across it a noble stone bridge, of several arches, and paved with large square stones." Bell also makes frequent allusion to an earthquake, which did great damage to this part of the country in July, 1719. Many towns and villages were half destroyed, and some were wholly laid in ruins, and "vast numbers of people" were engulfed. "I must confess," says Bell, "it was a dismal scene to see everywhere such heaps of rubbish." The district being subject to earthquakes, makes it probable that the fine bridge has been destroyed by that agency. But what has become of the fine navigable river that existed in 1720, and has now disappeared? Has it also been upset by an earthquake? The river was probably the Kwei-ho, which now runs in another direction, but some of the gentlemen of Peking or Tientsin, who have explored the country, will no doubt elucidate this interesting question.

On the 19th we made an early start, and went at a very steady pace towards the northern chain of mountains. On approaching them we turned slightly to the left, and skirted the base of the hills. We met a good deal of traffic on the road here, all goods being carried on the backs of mules and donkeys. Coal formed a conspicuous object, on its way to Peking, where it is used to a considerable extent.

Immense flocks of sheep are continually passing in the

direction of Peking, and we also met a good many herds of horses bound the same way. Our mid-day halt was at Shacheng, a walled town.

All over this country are the ruins of old forts; and a line of square towers, with a good many blanks, runs nearly in the direction of the road. If these forts could speak they could tell a tale of many a hard-fought battle before and after the Mongol conquest of China.

This part of the country was hotly contested by Genghis Khan; and, in the years 1212 and 1213, the town of Suenwha-foo, and other places in the neighbourhood, were several times taken and re-taken. "A bloody battle" was fought near Hway-lai, wherein Genghis defeated the Kin, a Manchu dynasty who then ruled Kitay or Northern China. The pass at Nankow, and its fortresses, were taken by Chepe, one of Genghis's generals.

A story is somewhere told that, in olden times, when intelligence was transmitted through the country by beacon fires lighted on these towers, an emperor was cajoled by one of his ladies to give the signal of alarm and summon his generals and officers from all quarters. The word was given, and the signal flashed through the Chinese dominions. The Mandarins assembled in the capital to repel the invader, but, finding they had merely been used as playthings to amuse a woman, they returned in wrath to the provinces. By and by the Tartars did come; the alarm was again given; but this time no one responded to the emperor's call for aid.

At Chi-ming-i, another walled town, we had done our day's work, but it was too early to halt, so we pushed on to a small village called Shan-shui-pu. At Chi-ming-i we met the Yang-ho, a small river that seems to lose itself in the sand. Turning northwards we followed the course of the Yang-ho, and entered another defile. The scenery at the

entrance of the pass, where the opening is wide, with a number of valleys running into the hills, and snug-looking villages nestling in cosy nooks, is a relief from the dull monotony of the plain on the one side, and from the wild rocky barriers on the other. It is a romantic little spot, full of verdure, and completely sheltered from the north winds. It has therefore been a favourite resort for ecclesiastics; for, with all their dullness, the Chinese priests have everywhere displayed excellent taste in the selection of sites for their temples and monasteries.

The following pretty legend of the place is given by Bell, and, as he says, it is a fair specimen of the numerous fabulous stories which the Chinese imagination delights to feed upon:—"Near this place is a steep rock, standing on a plain, inaccessible on all sides, except to the west, where a narrow winding path is cut in the rock, which leads to a Pagan temple and nunnery built upon the top of it. These edifices make a pretty appearance from the plain, and, as the story goes, were built from the foundation, in one night, by a lady, on the following occasion. This lady was very beautiful, virtuous, and rich, and had many powerful princes for her suitors. She told them she intended to build a temple and a monastery of certain dimensions, with her own hands, in one night, on the top of this rock; and whoever would undertake to build a stone bridge over a river in the neighbourhood, in the same space of time, him she promised to accept for a husband. All the lovers having heard the difficult task imposed on them, returned to their respective dominions, except one stranger, who undertook to perform the hard condition. The lover and the lady began their labour at the same time, and the lady completed her part before the light appeared, but as soon as the sun was risen, she saw, from the top of the rock, that her lover had not half finished his bridge, having raised only the pillars for the arches. Failing, therefore,

in his part of the performance, he also was obliged to depart to his own country, and the lady (poor lady!) passed the remainder of her days in her own monastery."

The Yang-ho had been flooded a few weeks before. It had now subsided, but still it came down from the hills roaring like a cataract. It runs through the pass, and falls not less than 200 feet in a distance of five miles. We followed its course through the mountains, sometimes close to the river. The noise of it at times was deafening, and one of my ponies could with difficulty be kept on the path from fright at the noise. The road became very difficult as we ascended the pass, and it grew dark long before we reached our halting-place, Shan-shui-pu. When we got there we found but poor accommodation. We managed to eat some rice and eggs, and surveyed the premises to find a decent place to sleep, but without success. Six Mongol travellers were lying on the ground in the outer yard, side by side, their sleep undisturbed by the noise our party made in coming into the hostelry. We slept in our litters.

\* Coal is worked in this neighbourhood, but in a very imperfect way. As far as I could detect, it is merely scooped out of the hill-sides where the seam happens to crop out.

At half-past five next morning we left Shan-shui-pu. The road continued very rocky for a mile or two, and led through an undulating country. We then got on to another terrace very much like the one we crossed yesterday, and bounded by two parallel ranges of hills.

At Suen-wha-fu, a large walled city, we halted to breakfast in a very comfortable inn, much frequented by Russian travellers, who had inscribed their names on the walls as far back as 1858.

Mr. Neetzli and I rode ahead of the caravan in order to reach Chien-kia-kov early, and see how the land lay. Chan-

kia-kow was the critical point in our journey, and we were naturally anxious to manage matters there with proper address. If we could but get camels to carry us across the desert to Kiachta, we were safe from all annoyance and delay for the rest of our journey. So we innocently thought ; but the sequel will show how short-sighted we were.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHAN-KIA-KOW.

WE reached Chan-kia-kow at 1 o'clock, after a hard ride. It is a large, straggling town, lying in a valley surrounded on three sides by mountains, and is bounded on the north by the Great Wall, which descends precipitously from the brow of the hill, crosses the valley, and up the other side. The town of Chan-kia-kow has a character peculiarly its own. It derives its importance from its being the focus of the trade between Russia and China. All goods to and from Kiachta must pass this way, whether on the direct route for the Hu-quang provinces or *via* Tientsin. The result is a large "foreign" population—that is, of Chinese from other provinces. Many of these men have passed most of their lives in Kiachta, and speak Russian. Most of them are wealthy; indeed, the Kiachta trade has been the means of enriching both Chinese and Russians, and many of both nations who have been engaged in it have amassed large fortunes. There is an outward appearance of wealth in Chan-kia-kow, and more show of newness than one meets with in other of their fusty old towns. Some new temples have lately been built by the merchants, and new archways, of which the paint is fresh and good, a thing rarely seen in China. This being the frontier town between China and Mongolia, attracts considerable numbers of Mongols, who bring in their camels to hire for the transport of goods across the desert, and drive in their sheep, cattle, and horses for

sale, taking back with them in exchange store of brick-tea and small articles of various sorts, such as pipes, tobacco, &c. The Russians, also, have had a factory here for a few years, and altogether a rare motley crowd is the population of Chan-kia-kow. The Russians call it Kalgan, a name of Mongol origin, meaning, according to Bell, "the everlasting wall." But it is more probably a corrupt form of Halgan, or Khalgan, signifying a gate. The name is quite out of use among the modern Mongols, who invariably employ the Chinese name.

Mr. Noetzli first endeavoured to hunt up some of his Chinese acquaintance, and a tedious business it was, in the interminably long streets, and in a rather hot sun, fatigued as we were with a long ride. After several false scents, we hit on the establishment of a Shanse man who had been thirty years in Kiachta. He and his household spoke good Russian, and he was proud to serve up tea, European fashion, with cups and saucers, sugar and teaspoons. This was very acceptable to us; and we rested as long as we could under his roof, while he entertained us with much interesting conversation, and many cups of the cheering beverage. Having got directions by which to find out the Russians, who had lately gone into new quarters, we soon traced them out in a neat little house built on the hill-side, out of town, that is, beyond the Great Wall, in the narrow pass leading into Mongolia. Mr. Noetzli, being already acquainted with some of them, and speaking a little Russian, we soon made friends with them, and induced them to invite us to take up our quarters with them. So, tying up our beasts, we abandoned ourselves to tea-drinking for an hour or two. The Russians were exceedingly kind and hospitable to us. We were much more comfortable with them than we could hope to be in a Chinese inn; but we derived other advantages from living with the Russians which were of more

importance to us. We were not friendless; the cunning Chinese could not look on us merely in the light of victims who had come there to be choused and swindled. Our negotiations for transport would pass through the hands of our Russian friends, who were accustomed to deal in such matters. So far all was well. But Mr. Noetzli had sent an express on some time before to ask the Russians to prepare us camels. Had they done it? No. This looked black rather, but we resigned ourselves to circumstances, confidently believing that things would mend when they came to the worst. We now prepared to play our last card, which was that Mr. Noetzli should go, accompanied by Chebekin, the Russian factotum, a most indefatigable fellow, who speaks Mongol like a native, to a Lama convent, called Bain-tolochoi, two days' journey into Mongolia. There they were to discover a certain priest, to whom Noetzli was accredited by the lamas at Peking, and endeavour to get him to advise some of his Mongol brethren to give us camels. The simple Mongols reverence their lamas, and will readily execute their behests, even at great personal inconvenience. This lama was a man of great influence in his own circle, and we were a little sanguine about the result, if only a favourable reception could be had. It was arranged, therefore, that our two friends should set out on horseback on the morrow, while we kicked our heels about in idleness and suspense at Chan-kia-kow.

The next morning, 21st of August, while we were at breakfast, two Mongols came lounging into the place. One of them was the courier who carries the post-bag to Kiachta, who was hanging about waiting for post-day; the other was a friend of his, but apparently a stranger to our hosts. We took the opportunity of asking about camels, and Chebekin set to work palavering. In a quarter of an hour the whole thing was settled, we were to have camels in four days, and



we should be ready to start on the fifth day. The price we paid for eight camels (we really had twelve) for 800 miles, was 150 taels (£50), and two bricks of tea to the ferryman of a certain river. Thus we were once more at ease in our minds; the two scouts were well pleased to see their horses unsaddled again, and we were all happy together.

The next day Mr. Noetzli left us to return to Tientsin, and we were rather in a bad plight, not being able to communicate with our Russian friends, except in Chinese, a language of which we were almost wholly ignorant. One of them vigorously rubbed up some English he had once learned, and in a few days made great progress.

While we are waiting for our camels we have plenty of time to see Chan-kia-kow, but after all there is not much to see. The view from the house where we lived was across the pass, and looked straight on the mountain wall on the other side. So close were we to the mountain that the sun was several hours up before he was seen topping the hill. The Great Wall runs over the ridges of these hills, nearly east and west. This structure is entirely in ruins here. The rubbish that once composed it remains and marks the line. Many of the towers are still standing. I doubt if the wall ever has been so massive in this quarter as near its eastern terminus, where I crossed it a few years ago. Where the Great Wall crosses the town of Chan-kia-kow it is kept in good repair, and has a good solid arch with a gate which is closed nominally at sunset. There is no traffic from the town except through this port, and all Mongols and Chinese dismount in passing.

One of our amusements in Chan-kia-kow was to attend the horse-fair which is held every morning on an esplanade just outside the city on the Mongol side of the Great Wall. It is a most exciting scene, and attracts a great concourse of people. Several hundred ponies, chiefly Mongol, are here

exposed for sale every morning. They are tied up in line on either side, leaving the middle space clear, and are taken out in turns and ridden up and down the open space by wild-looking jockeys, who show off their paces to the highest advantage. The fast ones are galloped as hard as their legs can carry them from end to end of the course, pulling up dead short, about ship and back again, the riders all the while holding out their whip hand at full length, and yelling like infuriated demons. There are generally half a dozen on the course at a time, all going full tilt, and brushing past each other most dexterously. They go tearing through the crowd of spectators without checking their pace, and yet it is rare for any one to get ridden over. Amongst these ponies are many extraordinary trotters, and many trained to artificial paces. These are generally more sought after by purchasers than the gallopers.

A number of men hang about the horse-fair who act as brokers between buyers and sellers. These men are invariably Chinese. They soon attached themselves to us, offering their services, and descanting on the merits of the various steeds that were constantly scouring past us. Their mode of making and receiving offers is to pull their long sleeves down and communicate with each other by the touch of the fingers. This seems to be more of a traditional ceremony than anything else, for when they have made a bid with so much show of secrecy, they frequently continue the bargaining *vivâ voce* in the hearing of the whole multitude. The prices of the ponies sold varied from five taels to twenty, or say from thirty shillings to six guineas. We had occasion to make some purchases, and paid about ten taels each for very good useful ponies. One of mine that I had brought from Tientsin had got a very bad sore back from the last day's ride with a badly fitting saddle. He was useless to me in that condition, and I sold him to a horsedealer for five taels.

Large droves of cattle and sheep came in from Mongolia, but the sale of these is not carried on with so much ostentation as that of the horses.

We daily, almost hourly, observed long strings of ox-carts coming down through the pass loaded with short square logs of soft wood. The carts are of the roughest description, and have not, I think, a bit of iron in their construction. This wood is brought from the mountains near Urga, across the desert of Gobi, a distance of 600 miles, and is chiefly used in the manufacture of coffins by the Chinese. These ox caravans travel very slowly, a journey of 600 miles occupying forty days or more; but it is a cheap and convenient mode of conveyance. The animals feed themselves on the way, and cost very little to start with. Camels could do the work, but a camel is a wretched object in harness, and is quite unable to drag even a light cart through a steep pass. Horses or oxen have to do this work for them. The pass at Chan-kia-kow is very stony for some fifteen miles, and the oxen have to be shod with thin iron plates. The Chinese farriers at Chan-kia-kow are very expert at shoeing cattle and horses. They don't attempt to make a shoe to fit any particular hoof, but keep a stock on hand, and selecting the nearest size, they hammer the shoe approximately to the shape of the hoof. They don't trouble themselves to cut the hoof down much, and you can have your beast shod on all four feet in a remarkably short time.

The head of the Russian establishment had been absent on a journey to Peking. He returned while we were in his house, travelling, as we had done, in a mule-litter. Amongst his travelling gear that we saw turned out of the palanquin was a small sized "*samovar*," or tea-urn, which is the greatest institution in Russia, and as we were first introduced to it in Chan-kia-kow I must give some account of it here. *Samovar* is composed of two Russian words, meaning, I

believe, "self-boiling." It is a very simple and admirable contrivance for boiling water quickly, and keeping it boiling, without which it is impossible to make tea fit to drink. The samovar is an elegantly shaped vase, made of brass, with a tube about two and a half inches in diameter going down the centre from top to bottom. A charcoal fire burns in this tube, and, as the water is all round it, a large "heating-surface" is obtained, and the water is acted on very rapidly. Samovars are made of all sizes, the capacity being estimated in tea cups. An average sized one contains twenty to twenty-five cups, or rather glasses, for it is customary among the Russians to drink tea out of tumblers. Those who can afford it drink very good tea, and they are probably the most accomplished tea-drinkers in the world; our countrywomen might even learn a lesson from them in the art of tea-making. They use small earthenware tea-pots, and their first principle seems to be to supply the pot bountifully with the raw material. The infusion comes off very strong, and they judge of its strength by the colour in the glass. They put but a little tea in the glass, and then dilute it with boiling water from the samovar, in about the proportions of the whiskey and water in toddy. As a rule, they use sugar and milk, or cream, when procurable. At Chan-kia-kow it was not to be had, for the Chinese do not use milk, or any preparation from it; and it probably never occurred to the Russians that they might keep their own cow for a mere song. The Russian gets through an amazing quantity of tea in the course of a day, and I verily believe they consume more per head than the Chinese themselves. The samovar is almost constantly blowing off steam—morning, noon, and night it is to be seen on the table, and they never stop sipping tea while there is any water left. It is as much a necessary of life with them as their daily bread, or tobacco to an inveterate smoker, and their attachment to their own way of

making it, is strikingly exhibited by the fact, that a Russian, travelling among the Chinese, where every possible facility for tea-making is at hand, should consider it essential to his comfort to carry his own samovar about with him.

During our stay at Chan-kia-kow, we experienced a considerable change in the weather. The first two days it was hot, but with a fresher and more elastic atmosphere than about Peking. This is probably due to the elevation, and the vicinity of mountains. We had ascended by successive passes and terraces from Peking about 2500 feet, which is approximately the elevation of Chan-kia-kow. A thunder-squall on the 21st of August cooled the air so much that we had to sleep under a blanket that night. Next morning was quite chilly with the thermometer at 71°. At mid-day on the 23rd it stood at 72°, and on the morning of the 24th it was 65°. It got warmer again afterwards, but we began to think there was something in the Russian warnings of great cold in Mongolia, and we did not regret being well provided with blankets and furs.

As the time drew near for our departure we seriously set to work to supply ourselves with necessaries for the journey across the desert. Our Mongol friends had contracted to carry us to Kiachta in thirty days, but to provide against accidents we allowed a good deal more. Although we were well supplied for the desert journey with preserved provisions, wine, and bottled porter, the opportunity of procuring fresh vegetables was too tempting to be overlooked. At Chan-kia-kow we found some of the finest cabbages\* in the world, carrots, &c. Potatoes are also to be had in the season, but we were too early. These and some fresh beef equipped us fully in that department.

Then we had to purchase two carts to travel in. The

\* These cabbages are said to have been originally introduced from Russia.

Russians and Chinese always travel so, for it would be too fatiguing to ride on a camel all the way, they go so long at a stretch—sixteen to eighteen hours without stopping. The carts are built on the same principle as those in use about Peking and Tientsin, but larger. They are drawn by camels. We essayed to make these purchases, and soon found one cart in good order, barring the wheels. We then asked a wheelwright to make a pair of wheels for it, but he would have charged more for the wheels than the cost of a new cart, completely furnished.

It was evident that we could not manage these matters without being shamelessly imposed upon, and we therefore begged our good friends, the Russians, to take our business in hand. Everything now went smoothly. Two carts were quickly found, second-hand, and at moderate prices. When we had got them we found they wanted harness, that is, sundry strips of leather thongs, attached to the points of the shafts, and which are secured in a very primitive, but effective, way to the saddle gear of the camels. Then the covers of our carts looked rather weather-beaten, and it would be cold in Mongolia. New felt covers had therefore to be obtained, and for extra warmth, nailed on over the old ones. Our wheels would want oiling. We must therefore have five catties of oil, cost 500 cash. But how to carry it? A pot was requisite—cost 150 cash more. There was really no end to the small things that suggested themselves. We had ponies—extra felt saddle cloths were wanted to protect their backs. And how were we to catch them when turned out to graze during our halts? Hobbles must be got for this. We also took some dry food for our ponies to eat when the grass was very thin, but they would not look at it, and we had eventually to throw it away to lighten our camels. What with extra rope, a bag of charcoal, covers for our baggage in case of rain, lanterns, and a variety of other

things, we made up a formidable list of odds and ends. The account rendered filled a sheet of foolscap, but the whole amount of our purchases at Chan-kia-kow, exclusive of the first cost of two carts, came to less than six pounds, and this included several pairs of felt boots and a couple of goat-skin jackets. No one travelling that way (unless it be in the early summer), should omit to procure a couple of pairs of these felt boots. There is nothing like them for warmth, and they can be got large enough to pull over your other boots. I used mine nearly all the way to Moscow, and rarely experienced the sensation of cold feet, though exposed in all sorts of carriages, and in severe weather.

On the 25th of August, the Mongol gave notice that the camels were at hand, and on the 26th they came into the courtyard, uttering that disagreeably plaintive cry that is peculiar to the camel, and more particularly to the juveniles. The camels looked very large and ungainly in the small enclosure, but the Mongols soon made room by making them kneel down close together, when they immediately commenced chewing the cud. The Mongols manage their camels by means of a tweak passed through the nose, with a thin string attached. They pull the string with a slight jerk, saying "Soh, Soh," and the animal, screaming the while, falls on his knees, and with three oscillating movements he is flat down with his belly on the ground.

The Mongols had already tackled our baggage and arranged it to their own satisfaction, so as to suit not only the weight each camel was to carry, but to balance one side equally with the other. Each package is well lashed up with stout rope, leaving a short loop. In loading, a package is lifted up on each side simultaneously, the loops crossed over the camel's back between the humps, one loop passed through the other, and secured by a wooden pin. The load is then allowed to fall, the weight comes on the wooden pin, and so keeps it in

its place. The back of the camel is protected by a series of pieces of thick felt, ingeniously laid round the humps, on the sides, and very thickly over the hollow between the humps. This mass of felt is kept in its place by means of a framework of wood on each side, lashed together across the camel's back.

Some hours were occupied in adjusting the camel loads and getting all ready for the start. We did not hurry, as we could not afford to forget anything now, as we were about to plunge into the desert, where we would be as entirely thrown on our own resources as if we were in a ship at sea.

Horses had to be hired to take our carts through the pass, a distance of fifteen miles, the camels being unequal to the task. The camel has little strength in proportion to his size. His formation peculiarly adapts him to carry weight, his whole strength being concentrated in the arch of his back; and yet in proportion he carries much less than a mule, that is, considerably less than double. For draught purposes, as I have already mentioned, the camel is ill adapted. His pace is remarkably slow, and in short he is only fit to work in deserts where, comparatively speaking, no other animal can live. His faculty of going for many days without food or water, and of nourishing himself on any sort of vegetable growth that comes in his way, is invaluable to his nomad masters.



## CHAPTER VI.

### MONGOLIA.

WE left Chan-kia-kow on horseback, escorted by three of our kind Russian friends, Messieurs Weretenikoff, Iguminoff, and Beloselutsoff, who accompanied us a few miles up the pass, and bid us God speed. It took a long time for our camel-drivers to form the order of march, and we had got far ahead of them. So, coming to a spot where there was a little grass, we dismounted to give our beasts a feed, thus putting in practice a maxim which travellers in strange countries learn by daily experience to adopt for themselves and their beasts,—to eat when they can.

My pony, being rather sharp in the back, I had over-done him with thick saddle-cloths in my anxiety to preserve him in ridable condition ; for though very old he was a rare good one, but viciously inclined, having once before had his paws on my shoulders. As the camels ~~have~~ came in sight, I essayed to mount, but had not got into my seat when, what with the pony's capers and bad saddling, I came to grief, and was left sprawling on my face on the stones, which spoiled my physiognomy and my temper at the same time, and nearly obliterated one optic. It was painful to contemplate my brave steed career-ing about with my good saddle under his belly, and reins going all to pieces amongst his legs. The vision of a month's riding vanished away in a moment. A ray of hope dawned on me as I saw my favorite settle down in a small enclo-

sure, bearing a poor crop of under-grown millet, but there was no one near to catch him. After a little, the husbandman appeared, and stoutly remonstrated with me for turning my cattle into his field. I was in no mood to tolerate abuse, for my abraded skin was smarting considerably. I offered the aggrieved agriculturist the alternative of catching my pony, or leaving him where he was. The Mongols, and also the Chinese borderers, are very expert in catching horses—their favourite dodge is to crawl up to his head on all-fours. My friend tried this, but he was unfortunately too fat, and when he got his hand within an inch and a-half of the remnant of my poor bridle, the pony started off and went straight back at full gallop in the direction of Chan-kia-kow. My heart died within me at the sight. The camels having now come up, one of the men went in pursuit, and with the assistance of the country people brought back the renegade, with the loss of my bridle and one stirrup—not so bad as I expected.

The pass is a narrow gorge between steep hills, with little cultivated corners here and there. A small stream trickles down the side, and the road is strewn with round pebbles, which gives it the appearance of the bed of a river. The ascent is very steady and regular, gaining considerably more than 2000 feet in fifteen miles. The road is tolerable all the way, until about the top of the ascent, which is very rough and rocky. Rather late in the evening we got to our halting-place well on to the table land, which is at an elevation of 5300 feet above the sea.

The Chinese are the most patient and persevering agriculturists in the world. They have pushed their aggressions through the pass at Chan-kia-kow—on the hill-sides, wherever they can find soil enough to hold together—and into the skirts of the desert itself. They get but a poor return for their labour, however; their crops seem to struggle for bare

existence, and the farmers must depend more on their live stock than their crops.

In other parts of Mongolia the Chinese have been more successful in extending their civilising influence into the prairie. In the kingdom of the Ouniots, further to the north, Huc tells us that since the Chinese, following their invariable custom, began to penetrate into the country of the Mongols, about the middle of the seventeenth century, the forests have disappeared from the hills, the prairies have been cleared by fire, and the new cultivators have exhausted the fecundity of the soil. "It is probably to *their system of devastation* that we must attribute the extreme irregularity of the seasons which now desolate this unhappy land." A curse seems to have rested on the industrious invaders. The seasons are out of joint. Droughts are frequent, then sandstorms and hurricanes, then torrents of rain which wash away fields and crops together in a general deluge, and the land is thenceforth incapable of being ploughed. Famines follow, and the people torment themselves with presentiments of calamity.

That all this is due to the Chinese agriculturists is hard to comprehend. It is not their practice elsewhere to "exhaust the fecundity of the soil." Huc propounds the new and strange doctrine that cultivation of deserts is a system of devastation. The truth seems to be that Huc, with the strong partiality he always evinces to the Mongols, was overcredulous of their stories. The Mongols, very naturally, consider themselves aggrieved by the Chinese. The latter first bought the right of cultivating the prairie, and, as their numbers increased, the weaker race necessarily gave way, moving their tents and their sheep further and further into the desert. The poor Mongols now see, with feelings of sorrow, the plough desecrating the ground where their fathers fed their flocks; they look with hopeless regret on the past

as a kind of golden age, which their fancy dresses in a halo of peace, happiness, and prosperity. The hated Kitat at once suggests himself as the cause of these changes, and the Mongols delight to feed their hatred out of the copious store of their imagination.

A process exactly analogous has been going on in the country of the Manchus, where the arable soil has been occupied by Chinese colonists, almost to the entire exclusion of the natives. Hatred is strongly developed there also; but I can answer for it that there, at least, cultivation has not exhausted the fecundity of the soil, nor devastated the country.

The Chinese also with whom Huc conversed would readily admit the superiority of the past. They have a reverence for antiquity, and whenever they could spare a thought from the stern realities of the present, they would mourn their hard fate, and exalt the glories of the past.

The sun had been very hot all day, but when we came to pitch our tent at night we were shivering with cold, and could with difficulty hold the hammer to drive the pins into the ground. It is always chilly at night in Mongolia, even in the hot weather, but we were not prepared for such a degree of cold on the 26th August, in latitude  $41^{\circ}$ . All our blankets were brought into requisition, and we passed a comfortable night. Next morning the thermometer, which was under a blanket, showed  $35^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit.

The morning of the 27th of August was as bright and cheery as the most lively fancy could paint. The air resounded with the notes of hosts of skylarks, which one does not often hear in these far-off regions. The sun warmed up fast, and in a few hours dried up the heavy dew that lay on the grass in the early morning. The pasture was exceedingly rich, and sprinkled with "gowans" and other wild flowers, which imparted a delicious fragrance to the fresh morning air. Many herds of cattle and horses were scattered

over the plain, the Mongol herdsmen incessantly galloping round their flocks to keep them together, their shouts audible from great distances in the still air, and the perpetual movement of vast numbers of parti-coloured beasts gave an animation to the scene which was quite exhilarating to the spirits. A small brook trickled tortuously through the plain, where we managed to kill a few snipe, greatly to the delight of the straggling Mongols, who rode up to us from various quarters. The only building in sight was a temple which we had passed in the night, and which was the last brick-and-mortar structure we were to see for many days. We were now fairly among the dwellers in tents, and began to realise what it was to be cut off from civilised life; for, whatever may be the various opinions of Chinese civilisation in its higher developments, you can at all events obtain in China every necessary and many luxuries for money. In the "Land of Grass" we had to depend on our own resources, but with the comfortable assurance that these were amply sufficient for us. Our introduction to nomad life was under happy auspices, and we were at the outset favourably impressed with the Mongols and their country, an impression which never entirely wore out, even under very adverse circumstances. I never till that morning experienced the consciousness of absolute *freedom*. Many Mongol visitors rode up to our encampment, bringing plentiful supplies of new milk, cheese, and other preparations from milk very like Devonshire cream.

About 8 o'clock the camels were got in, and we made a start, halting again at noon near the "yourts" of some Lama friends of our camel-drivers. This was a short stage, and we endeavoured to remonstrate with our conductor, but as at that time we could not understand a word of each other's language, the broad Saxon merely provoking a volley of guttural Mongol, we made no progress towards a mutual

understanding. We were again favoured with numerous visitors, and our conductor had evidently serious business to negotiate, which occupied the whole afternoon. It ended in his exchanging his pony for another, and getting a fresh camel. It was close on sunset before the camels were loaded, and a fresh start effected. During our halt we had time to make the acquaintance of our camel-drivers. The chief was a Lama named Tup-tchun, a good, easy man, with all the native simplicity of his race. He was the responsible man to us, and I believe owned the camels. He had two assistants; the first a clansman of his own, Tellig by name, a fine, good-natured, bullet-headed, swarthy-complexioned, indefatigable fellow, the equanimity of whose temper nothing could ever disturb. The Lama placed his whole confidence in Tellig, and we naturally did the same as we became better acquainted with the excellence of his character. The other had a name I never could pronounce, so I will not attempt to spell it. He had some taint of wickedness in his eye, and showed more craft and cunning than the average Mongol. He could likewise speak a few words of Chinese, hence we gave him the nickname of *Kitat*, the Mongol name for Chinese, a word abominated by all true Mongols. He stoutly rebelled for a long time against his new name, but it greatly amused his companions, and, as he was never called by any other appellation, he was compelled at last to answer to Kitat.

The order of our march was this. One of the Mongols on a camel rode ahead, leading the next camel by a string from his nose. Half the caravan followed him in single file, each camel being slightly attached to the preceding by his nose-string. The other driver, also on a camel, brought up the rear-guard in the same way. The Lama was more privileged, for he never took any active part in leading the caravan, but rode about on a pony, talking now to

Tellig, now to the Kitat, and now to us, then suddenly breaking out into some of his wild native chants. He had a fine sonorous voice, and his singing was a pleasant relief from the monotony of the way, and when Tellig joined in chorus they made the welkin ring. The Mongols sing with their natural voice, and have far more music in their souls than the squeaking Chinese. The Lama indulged himself in a gossip with every traveller he met, and would often be left out of sight, but with his active pony he could easily overtake the slow-moving camels. When he descried a Mongol yurt in the distance he seldom missed a chance of riding up to it, to bestow his benediction on the inmates, and drink tea with them. Nor was the Lama entirely useless on the march, for the rearward camels were frequently getting loose, and dropping into the rear, as Tellig and the Kitat seldom thought of looking behind them. The moment a camel feels himself at liberty he stops to graze. I have never seen one voluntarily follow his leader. Great delay occurred sometimes from this cause, and the Lama saved us much time by riding after a stray camel, dexterously catching up the nose-string with his whip-handle, and leading the straggler up to the caravan. The leading-string of the camel is fastened to the gear of his leader in such a loose manner that a very slight resistance is enough to undo it. The reason for this is that if the string were secured firmly, any check in the rear camel, or the leading one advancing from a halt before the rear one was ready, would tear the camel's nose. A nose once broken in this way, it is difficult to find good holding ground for the tweak, and the Mongols are therefore very economical of camels' noses.

As for ourselves, we each had two ponies to ride, and we varied our manner of travelling by alternately sitting in our carts and riding our ponies. We also walked a good deal

with our guns, for the pace of the camels was so slow that we could range at will over the country, and still keep up with the caravan. The camel's pace is slow and sure, the average of a day's march being two miles an hour. The actual pace is of course quicker, but the frequent stoppages to adjust loads, and from camels breaking loose, reduce it to two miles per hour. Sitting in the cart is never very agreeable. The track is not cut up with ruts like a road in China, and the jolting is considerably less; but it is difficult to get a comfortable posture without lying down, and sitting in the front of the vehicle you are unpleasantly near the odour that exudes from the pores of the camel's hide, to which it requires a long apprenticeship to get accustomed. It is most uninteresting, besides, to sit for an hour or two contemplating the ungainly form of the ugliest of all created things, and to watch his soft spongy foot spreading itself out on the sand, while you reckon that each of these four feet must move 700,000 times before your journey is accomplished.

Our ponies were tied behind the carts, and all went quietly except my old one "Dolonor," who was sagacious enough to break his halter regularly, and follow the caravan in his own way, which was to trot a few hundred yards ahead and apply himself vigorously to the grass until the caravan had passed some distance, when he would trot up and repeat the operation. With all that he fell off in condition more than any of the others.

Starting at sunset, as I have said, we proceeded all night without stopping. It was a fine moonlight night, but an uncomfortable one for us. Not knowing we were to travel all night, we were unprepared for sleeping in our carts, and suffered a good deal from cold and disturbed rest. With every precaution to close them in, the carts are thoroughly well ventilated; but subsequent experience taught us to roll



up warmly, for most of our nights in the desert were spent in our carts on the road.

At sunrise on the 28th my thermometer beside my bed stood at 43°. At 8 o'clock we halted and pitched our tents. Our Mongols had a tent for themselves, made of thin blue cotton stuff, and black inside with the smoke of years. Their contract with us included tent accommodation, as also fuel and water; but we congratulated ourselves daily on being provided with our own commodious and substantial bit of canvas. The Mongols make their fire in the tent and lounge round it while the pot is boiling. Some of the smoke manages to escape through the opening that answers the purpose of a door, running from the apex of the tent to the ground in the shape of a triangle. For the rest they don't seem to mind it, although it is almost suffocating to those who are unaccustomed to it. I noticed the eyes of the Mongols have mostly a bloodshot hard appearance, often showing no white at all, attributable no doubt to the argol smoke in which they pass so much of their time. The tents being pitched, the next operation is to procure a supply of *argols*, or more correctly *ar'ch'il*, which is dried cow or horse dung, and is to be found all over the desert. So long as we were in a populous part of the country, that is, if there were three Mongol yourts within as many miles of us, we were saved the trouble of going out to gather them, for our tents were seldom up for many minutes before a woman would appear bearing a large basket of the precious material. This seems to be the ordinary custom of the Mongols, and is a part of the genuine hospitality they show to strangers. Our halting-places were selected with a view to water. There is no scarcity of water in the desert, but a stranger would be sorely puzzled to find it, for there is nothing to mark the position of the wells. The Mongols have an instinctive knowledge of the country, and in order to encamp near good water they

make their march an hour or two longer or shorter as the case may be. When the caravan halts, one of the Mongols is despatched on a camel with two water-buckets to fetch water from the well, generally some distance from the line of march. The buckets have a head to them with two holes in it stopped with wooden plugs. The water is poured out of the larger hole at the side, while the smaller one in the centre is opened to admit the air, to enable the water to pass out freely. In selecting a halting-place, the Mongols generally contrive to combine a good bit of pasture with the vicinity of water, for this is naturally of much importance to them, as the only feeding the animals get is a few hours' grazing during the halt, and that only once in twenty-four hours. Before the tent is set up the camels are unloaded and set free to graze, the horses are taken to water, and then hobbled and let loose. The camels are not supposed to want water, and they very rarely get it. Their lips and mouth are peculiarly adapted to quick feeding, the lips being long and very pliable, and the incisor teeth projecting outwards. They gather up a good mouthful of grass in a very short time, even where it is exceedingly scant, and as their food requires little or no mastication, they are enabled to take in a full daily supply of food in a few hours.

So far, Mongolia is a succession of plains and gentle undulations, much resembling the long swell of the ocean, and here and there the country is a little rough and hilly. The undulations stretch across our track from east to west. The whole face of the country looks like the sea. There is not a tree or any object to break the monotony of the vast expanse, but occasionally the yuart or tent of a Mongol family. The sunrise and sunset encourage the illusion, and the camel has been aptly called the ship of the desert.

The sun was hot during the day, but the thermometer in the shade only showed 73° at noon. Yesterday it was 71°.

After dinner we went out with our guns and bagged a few small birds of the curlew kind. We also came across a flock of wild geese, but, as usual, they were very wild. We had a chase after a herd of animals which have been called wild goats. The Chinese call them *whang-yang*, or yellow sheep: other tribes call them *dzeren*. The Mongols give them a name of their own, *gurush*, and do not associate them with either sheep or goats. They are really a kind of antelope (*Procapra gutturosa*), the size of a fallow deer, and of a yellowish brown colour, approaching to white about the legs. They are exceedingly swift and very shy, and as the country is so flat it is almost impossible to get within shot of them. They are usually found in large herds of several hundreds. We subsequently tried to stalk them on horseback, and did get some long random shots at them with a rifle, but to manage this properly there ought to be three or four people well mounted and with plenty of time. Our poor tired ponies were not fit for such work, and we never stopped the caravan for the sake of sport. Some of the Mongols do hunt the *gurush*, both on horseback and on foot. I never witnessed any successes, but they must shoot them sometimes, to pay for their powder and shot. They use a small-bored rifle, which has a rest placed about six inches from the muzzle, by which means they can lie on their face and take their aim, the muzzle being raised well clear of the ground by means of the rest.

We had a long halt to-day, partly in consequence of a crack being discovered in one of the camels' feet. This is an infirmity they are subject to, and if sand and grit were allowed to get in, the animal would become lame and useless. The remedy, which is always at hand, is to sew a square patch of stout leather over the part affected, which they do in the roughest cobbler fashion. With a flat needle slightly curved they pierce the horny part of the sole, and fasten the

patch by means of leather thongs at each corner. This is only a temporary measure, and when a camel is taken that way, he must soon be turned out to grass. The Mongols have no trouble in getting at a camel's feet. They first make him squat down, and then two of them go at him with a sudden push and roll him over on his broadside, one of them keeping his head down while the other operates on the foot. The animal screams a good deal while he is being turned over, but once down he resigns himself helplessly to his fate.

We did not get off till five o'clock in the afternoon. The night was cloudy and no dew fell, and consequently it was not nearly so cold as the night before. The difference in temperature between a cloudy and a clear night is very marked in Mongolia.

We were now leaving the good pastures and the numerous herds of cattle behind, and on the morning of the 29th August we found ourselves getting into a very desert country with only a little scrub grass, of which our poor ponies found it hard work to make a meal. No horses or cattle were seen in this part, and the country seemed only capable of supporting sheep and camels. About eleven o'clock we halted, and encamped on almost bare sand. Not a single "yourt" was in sight, and, for the first time, we had no visitors. This must have been a relief to our Mongols, for they were compelled by custom and their natural hospitality to receive and be civil to all comers, and it was not easy for them to snatch even an hour's sleep. This must have been a great privation, for their mode of travelling all night precluded their getting any sleep at all, except on the backs of their camels while on the march, and in their tent during the six hours' halt in the day; and as that was broken up by cooking and eating, pitching and striking tents, loading and unloading camels, and other necessary matters, and the frequent and protracted visits from neighbouring yourts,

or travellers on the road, our poor Tartars had often to go for days together with hardly any sleep at all. But they never complained, and certainly were never betrayed into any rudeness to their inconsiderate countrymen.

We started again at 4:30 in the afternoon, and continued through gentle undulations, proceeding, as before, all through the night. Before morning we passed some rocky places over low hills, which sadly disturbed our sleep in the carts—in fact, our usual night's rest, while on the move, was far from being uninterrupted or comfortable, and it was only our fatigue and exposure to the air all day that enabled us to sleep at all under such circumstances. The rough hilly part was again succeeded by low undulations continually unfolding before us, and which became painfully monotonous to the eye. Distances are altogether deceptive, partly owing to the smooth, unbroken surface of the country, and partly to the mirage which is always dancing on the horizon, making small objects look large, and sometimes lifting them up into the air and giving them a variety of fantastic shapes.

About 11 o'clock on the 30th of August we halted, and went through our usual process of cooking and eating. We began to find that one meal a day did not suit our habits, and we soon learned to keep out a certain quantity of biscuit and cold meat when we had it so that we could make a breakfast or a supper without stopping to unload the camels. To these materials we added a handful of tea or some chocolate-paste, and in the morning rode up on our ponies to any *yourt* we happened to see that was smoking, and there made our breakfast. In the evening we often managed to do the same, but it frequently happened that we had no opportunity of doing this.

But I have not explained what a "*yourt*" is. It is simply the habitation of a Mongol family—a tent, but of a more permanent construction than the ordinary travelling tent. It

consists of a frame of light trellis work covered with thick felt, is circular in form, with a conical shaped roof, but nearly flat. A hole in the apex of the roof lets out the smoke from the argol fire which burns all day in the middle of the tent. At night, when the fire is out, and before the inmates retire to rest, the hole in the roof is covered up. I did not measure the upright part of the wall of the tent, but it is under five feet, and you cannot enter without stooping. The tent is about fifteen feet in diameter. A piece of felt hanging from the top forms a door. The Mongols sleep on mats laid on the ground, and pack very close. They have no bedding, but sleep generally in their clothes, merely loosing their girdles. In addition to the family, I have frequently observed a number of young kids brought into the tent for shelter on cold nights. When the owner decides on moving to better pastures, his yourt is packed up in a few hours and laid on the back of a camel, or, failing that, two oxen answer the purpose. Although yourt is the name always used by foreigners, I never heard it from a Mongol. They call it "gi-rai," as distinguished from a travelling tent, which they call "mai-chung."

Such are the dwellings of the Mongols, and so much are they attached to them, that even where they live in settled communities, as in Urga, where they have every facility for building wooden houses, they still stick to their yourts, merely enclosing them with a rough wooden paling. In the whole journey I did not meet with a single instance of a Mongol living in a house, or in anything else than a yourt or girai. The Mongols are very superstitious, and certain rules of etiquette have to be observed in riding up to and entering a yourt. One of these is that all whips must be left outside the door, for to enter a yourt with a whip in the hand would be very disrespectful to the residents. Huc explains this almost in the words—"Am I a dog that you should cross my

threshold with whips to chastise me?" There is a right and a wrong way of approaching a yourt also. Outside the door there are generally ropes lying on the ground, held down by stakes for the purpose of tying up their animals when they want to keep them together. There is a way of getting over or round these ropes that I never learned, but, on one occasion, the ignorant breach of the rule on our part excluded us from the hospitality of the family. The head of the house was outside his yourt when we rode up; we saluted him with the customary *Mendo! Mendo! &c.*; but the only response we got was a volley of quiet abuse, in which our salutation was frequently repeated in ironical tones, as much as to say, "Mendo! Mendo! you come to my tent with sugared words on your lips, and disregard the rules of civility, which a child would be ashamed of doing. Mendo! Mendo! If you do not know how to conduct yourselves like gentlemen, you had better go about your business." So we turned and went away, not in a rage, for we knew we had committed some grave offence against propriety.

The furniture of a Mongol yourt is very simple. A built-up fireplace in the middle of the floor is the only fixture. A large flat iron pan for cooking, or, if the parties are luxurious, they may possess two such utensils, and sport two fireplaces, by which means they can boil their mutton and water for their tea at the same time. A basin to hold milk, and a good large jug with a spout for the same purpose, and for the convenience of boiling it at the fire while the big pan is on, comprise all their kitchen and table service. Each person carries his own wooden *ei-ige*, or cup, in his bosom, and, so armed, is ready to partake of whatever is going anywhere; and his small pocket-knife, by which he can cut up his quota of mutton. A wooden box serves as a wardrobe for the whole family. No tables or chairs are necessary, and I found no

trace of a toilet service. These, with a few mats on the ground for squatting on by day, and sleeping on by night, comprise all the actual furniture of a yourt.

To-day, 30th August, we killed some sand-grouse. They were of the same species as those found about Peking and Tientsin (the *Pallas* sand-grouse), but were in much finer condition. They were fat, and of such excellent flavour that they would be considered a delicacy anywhere. All their crops which we dissected were full of small black beetles, and the same was the case with the curlew we killed. We fell in with a herd of guruh, and had some long shots; but we were never fortunate enough to bag any of these animals.

In leaving the caravan there is always more or less danger of getting lost. It has happened more than once to travellers. But still there is a beaten track all the way through the desert, which is distinctly marked in the grassy parts, and even in the sand it is traceable. In winter it may be obliterated, but still I think, with ordinary care, one ought not to lose himself in the desert.

At 6 p.m. we had returned to our caravan and again took the road. It came on very windy at night, with some rain, and as the winds were always from the north, and consequently in our teeth, we were miserably cold and uncomfortable in the carts, so much so that we ardently hoped that the Mongols, who were more exposed than we, would propose a halt. We could not do so ourselves, for that would have given the Mongols an excuse for all manner of delays in our journey, but we would have been glad to consent had we been asked. There was nothing for it, however, but to bear our burden patiently. The few bottles of water and milk we invariably carried with us in the carts were exhausted, and being much in want of something, we knew not what, we ordered the Mongols to stop at the first yourt they saw.



This they did at 11 o'clock, and having turned out an old woman we asked for water. They had none of that precious beverage (and if they had it might have been bad), but we got some boiled milk. I did not really want anything, but during the time the Mongols were negotiating with the lady, our carts were turned with the backs to the wind, and it seemed that I had never known what enjoyment was till then. It lasted but a quarter of an hour. The inexorable camels turned their noses to the wind again, and I spent the night in manipulating blankets and contorting limbs, but all to no purpose, for the merciless gale swept under and over and through me. In the morning as soon as daylight came we got out of our cold quarters and on to our ponies, stopped at a yurt where we indulged in a cup of hot chocolate, and warmed ourselves at the hospitable fire. In this yurt we found a record of the party who had preceded us on the journey, dated 11th June. Our poor Mongols and their camels were fatigued, and we did not object to an early halt on the 31st August. We camped in a very desert place, scarcely any grass at all; shot grouse for breakfast, and tried to believe that we were comfortable. But we were not, for if we had no other annoyance the impossibility of keeping the blowing sand out of our food was an evil hard to bear patiently. Everything, even the inside of our boxes, was filled with sand. Every means was tried in vain to prevent it from blowing under our tent. We walked about most of the day and tried to shoot, but the guns were nearly blown out of our hands, and that resource for the destitute had to be abandoned in despair.

About 4 in the afternoon we started again, wind still blowing a gale. The road became very rough, which was an additional reason for a restless night. We had many stoppages besides, and much shouting all through the night, which seriously disturbed our fitful naps, and in the morning

it was painfully evident that our poor camels were breaking down. One of them had several times refused to go on, and had eventually lain down with his load, and resisted all persuasion to rise. He had to be unloaded and the extra weight distributed among the stronger ones, at the risk of breaking them down also. The truth is the camels were not in condition when we started. We were too early for them. The practice of the Mongols is to work their camels hard from the autumn to the spring. Before the summer comes everything is taken out of them; their humps get empty and lie flat on their backs; their feet get out of order, and they have mostly bad sore backs. They are then taken off the road and turned out to grass. About this time they shed their long hair and become naked, and all through the hot weather the Mongol camel is the most miserable object that can be imagined. In the early autumn they have recruited their strength, their humps are firm and stand erect, their backs are healed, and they begin the campaign fresh and strong.

Our progress during the night was very slow, and towards morning the road became sandy—in some places very heavy. The cart-camels now suffered most, sweating and struggling with their work in a way that was far from reassuring to us who had the greater part of the journey still before us.

The whitened bones of camels are scattered all over the desert, but in this place they were more numerous than ever. I believe the camels always die on the road. They are worked till they drop, and when one of a caravan fairly breaks down, there is no alternative but to leave it to die on the sand.

Yourts are few and far between, and few cattle are to be seen; there is barely grass enough to support sheep and camels. We pushed on till 11 o'clock, and encamped at Mingan, where there were no yourts actually in sight, but

several within a few miles. There was really little or nothing to eat, and our trusty steeds were palpably suffering from their long stages and short commons. Serious misgivings crossed our minds as to the probability of our ponies carrying us much further, and we were concerned for them as well as for ourselves, for they had done our work well so far, and we felt kindly to them as the patient companions of our journey.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MONGOLIA—*continued.*

OUR lama received sundry visitors at Mingan, and had evidently some business to transact with them, for we soon saw him in earnest converse with some of the strangers in his tent, passing their hands into each others' sleeves as if bargaining with the fingers. This resulted in the sale of one of our camels—the one that had broken down. Our conductor had more matters to settle than that, however, but he was prevented by circumstances beyond his control. The fact is that on such occasions the Mongols consider it indispensable to imbibe freely of spirits, and our lama had to stand a bottle of *samschu*, a very ardent spirit made from rice. The Mongols drink liberally when they have a chance, and the Mingan lama was no exception to the rule, for in a short time he got so drunk as to become unmanageable. He began by breaking the tent-poles, no slight calamity in a country without wood; he soon became helpless, and lay down on his back, refusing absolutely to move. All idea of further business was abandoned, and the drunken Mongol's friends were ashamed, not so much at the exhibition he was making, but at the mischief he had perpetrated. He could hardly lie on his back, but they deemed that no valid objection to his riding on horseback. They therefore caught his pony, by main force lifted him on, and put the reins in his hands. The pony started off across the plain in the direction

of his home, quietly enough at first ; but the drunken rider began to swing about and stretch out his right hand, as the Mongols do when they want to excite their ponies to unusual exertion. The pony went off at full gallop, throwing up clouds of sand behind him as he went ; the rider's motions became more and more centrifugal until at last he rolled over and sprawled full length on the sand, apparently with no intention of moving. His friends rode after his pony, caught it, and hobbled it beside its master, and as evening was drawing on they left them both to their fate. Another of the party, not so far gone, was merrily drunk. He tried to work up a dispute with our Mongols, and promised us some amusement, but he also was got on his pony by the persuasion of his son, who was with him. The boy was ashamed of his papa, and did his best to take him off the field. They made several false starts together, but the old fellow grew warmer and more excited, again and again turning his horse's head and returning to our tent to "have it out." At last the young one prevailed, and they rode off together and disappeared in the distance. We were now left alone, at sunset, and our poor lama was left lamenting on his bad day's work, his waste of much good liquor to no purpose, and his broken tent-poles.

The Mongols are a pitiable set on foot, with their loose clumsy leather boots, but they are at home on horseback. From their earliest years they may be said to live on horseback, and the women are almost as expert as the men, mounting any animal that comes handiest, whether horse, cow, or camel, with or without saddle. Hue says he never saw a Mongol unhorsed ; but probably he never saw a dead-drunk lama forcibly put on a fiery steed.

Our lama received Sycee silver for the camel he sold. Silver is not much in use among the Mongols, their only real currency being very coarse brick tea. But it is a mistake to

suppose, as has been stated, that they are ignorant of the value of money.

We got away about 7 in the evening. The wind had fortunately lulled, and we passed a pretty comfortable night on the road, which was alternately hard and sandy. My "Dolor" pony, that had been voluntarily following the caravan, began to find the pastures getting too poor even for him, who had the privilege of grazing day and night. The last two days he remained faithful, but on the morning of the 2nd September, finding matters getting from bad to worse, he pricked up his ears, about ship, and galloped straight back by the way we had come. This was not much to be surprised at, all things considered, and I could not help commending him for his sagacity. The "Kitat" was despatched on his camel in quest of the fugitive before I was awake. Had I been consulted I certainly should not have consented to such a wild-goose chase, but the Mongols thought themselves bound in honour not to lose anything, although it was not in the contract that they were to look after ponies on the journey.

It was a very dry morning, but we got water for ourselves and our horses passing Borolji. The well there was very deep, and we were indebted to the friendly aid of some Mongols, who happened to have driven their cattle in to water, for obtaining a supply for our beasts. The head shepherd had brought with him a small bucket made of sheepskin, attached to the end of a long pole to enable him to reach the water. His own beasts were very thirsty and impatient to drink; the horses especially crowded eagerly round the well, neighing, biting, and kicking each other in their efforts to gain the best places. Nevertheless, the polite Mongol drew water for us first, and allowed us to continue our march. We kept on till 1.30, when we pitched our tents on the steppe, called "Gunshandak." No grass at all grows here, but the sand is slightly shaded with green by a small wild leek, that



THE ART OF GOB





grows in form much like the Mongolian grass. We had frequently observed this plant already sprinkled amongst the grass, but in Gunshandak it flourishes to the exclusion of everything else. The sheep and camels thrive on it. Our ponies also ate it freely, perhaps because they could get nothing else, and when our cattle were brought in from feeding they had a strong smell of onions about them.

The Kitat not having come up with my pony, we did not hurry away, and our Mongols availed themselves of the delay to buy and kill a goat from a neighbouring flock. We also bought a sheep for two rubles, or about six shillings. The seller, on being asked to kill it, told us we might do it ourselves. This was not to be thought of, and our own Mongols were too much occupied with their goat. We had, therefore, to resort to a little craft, for the sheep must certainly be put to death before we could eat it. Addressing the man, we said, how can we lamas kill an animal? This was sufficient. "Oh, you are lamas!" and he proceeded at once to business. The dexterity with which these Mongols kill and cut up a sheep is truly marvellous. They kill with a small knife which they insert into the belly, just below the breast-bone. Death is almost instantaneous. The object of this mode of slaughter is to save the blood inside the animal. Skinning is an easy process and soon done. The sheep is laid on his back on the sand, the skin is spread out on either side, a strip down the back being left attached while the cutting up is going on. The skin thus serves as a table, and so well does it answer the purpose that they will cut up a sheep into small pieces, and put everything, including lights and liver, on the skin, without ever touching the sand. The Mongols have a perfect practical knowledge of the anatomy of the sheep, and sever every joint with perfect ease, with only a small pocket-knife, no other instrument being used in any part of the process. The rapidity with which the whole

thing is done, is astonishing. Our butcher was unluckily called away during the operation to retrieve a young camel that had been crying for its dam all the morning, and had now broken its tether, so that I could not time him accurately. I shall not state the number of minutes usually occupied from the time a sheep is purchased till the mutton is ready for the pot, for I could hardly expect to be believed. On removing the intestines, &c., the blood is found all together in a pool. It is then carefully bled out and put into the cooking pan, or *taga*, for nothing is thrown away here. We gave ours to the butcher, as also the skin and the whole of the inside, except liver and kidneys. The wandering Mongols scent a sheep-killing like vultures, and there are never wanting some old women to lend a hand in making black-puddings, and such like, who are rewarded for their trouble by a share of the feast; for among the Mongols the first instalment of their sheep is eaten in less than half an hour from the time it is killed. The Mongol sheep are generally in good condition, but there is no fat about them at all, except in the tail, which is a heavy lump of pure suet, said to weigh sometimes ten pounds. The condition of the animal is judged by the weight of the tail. The Mongols use but little water in cleaning their mutton. The ubiquitous old woman, who installs herself as pudding-maker, handles the intestines in a delicate and artistic manner. She first of all turns them all inside out, and then coils them up into hard, sausage-shaped knots, without stuffing, which take up very little space in the pot. These and all the other loose things are first put into the pot, with the addition of as much of the meat as it will hold. The pot is filled so full that the water does not cover the meat, but that is of no consequence to the Mongols. It is soon cooked, and quickly eaten. When sufficiently boiled, one of the company adroitly snatches the meat, piece by piece, from the boiling cauldron, with his

fingers, and distributes it in fair proportions to the anxious expectants seated round. They never burn their fingers by this snap-dragon process. Their manner of eating mutton is most primitive, and I will also say disgusting. Each person gets a large lump or two, either in his lap, or on the mat on which he sits. He then takes a piece in his left hand as big as he can grasp; and, with the inevitable small knife in his right, he cuts off nuggets of mutton, using his thumb as a block, in the manner of cutting Cavendish tobacco. They literally bolt their mutton, and use no salt, bread, or sauce of any kind in eating it. When they have got all the meat off, they pare and scrape the bones very carefully, and when that is done, they break the bones up, and eat the marrow. Nothing is thrown away, except part of the eye, and the trotters. The tail is considered a delicacy, and is reserved for the head lama, or the honoured guest, who generously shares it with the others. I need only say that this mass of rich suet is eaten as I have described above.

When the solid part of the entertainment has been despatched, they put up their knives after wiping them on their clothes, and then proceed to drink the broth in their wooden cups. If they have any millet, they like to throw a little into the broth as they drink it. The millet gets softened a little as the cup is rapidly replenished, but no further cooking is necessary. When the broth is finished, they put clean water into the taga with a handful or two of brick tea, and go to sleep while it is boiling. The tea so made has of course a greasy appearance, and this practice of cooking everything in the same pot has probably given rise to the belief that they boil mutton and tea together, eating the leaves of the tea with the mutton. There may be Tartar tribes who do this, but the Khalkas Mongols certainly do not. The tea leaves, or rather stalks,—for their bricks are made up of tea dust and timber,—are always thrown away. It is necessary to

boil the tea to get anything out of it at all, and it is of course bitter and ill flavoured. I have drunk it when hard up; and when it is well diluted with milk it is not unpalatable, when you can get nothing else.

The Mongol tastes no doubt seem to us very unrefined, but they are natural. The great esteem in which they hold the fat as compared with the lean of mutton, is a plain expression of the direction in which their ordinary regimen is defective. It is well known that fat and farinaceous foods ultimately fulfil the same purposes in the human economy; they mutually compensate, and one or other is absolutely necessary. We thus find fat and oils eagerly sought after, wherever, as among the Mongols and Esquimaux, the cultivation of cereals is forbidden by soil and climate.

The value of a scale of diet does not, as might at first sight be supposed, consist in the prominence of any one article, but depends on the different ingredients which are necessary to sustain health, being duly proportioned; and wherever the food of a people is necessarily composed of one substance almost exclusively, the natural appetite will always mark out as delicacies those which are deficient. It is to this want of due proportion in the elements of diet that we must attribute the comparative muscular weakness of the Mongols, in spite of the abundant supply of mutton and the bracing air of the desert. The coolies of China and Japan greatly excel them in feats of strength, and in power of endurance, because the rice on which they feed contains a more varied proportion of the elements that nourish life, the poor quality of the fare being compensated by the incredible quantities which they consume.

• Our Mongols having slept off their first meal and drunk their tea, put the pot on the fire again, and cooked the remainder of the goat, on which they had another heavy blow-out late in the afternoon. The rapacity and capacity of

a Mongol stomach is like that of a wild beast. They are brought up to eat when they can, and fast when they must, and their digestion is never deranged by either of these conditions. They very much resemble their own camels in those useful qualities so necessary to the inhabitants of a desert. Our Mongols had really eaten nothing since leaving Chan-kia-kow. They had fasted for seven days at least, and gone almost entirely without sleep all that time, and yet suffered nothing from the fatigue they must have endured. They had certainly some millet seed and some Chinese dough, a little of which they put into their tea as they drank it, but of actual food they had none. They had now laid in a supply which would last them another week. They seldom carry meat with them, finding it more convenient to take it in their stomachs.

Lest it be thought that we also adopted the Mongol way of living, I must explain that we had a very complete set of cooking utensils, plates, knives and forks, and every other accessory to civilised feeding. We certainly had to a great extent to educate ourselves to live on one meal a day, but that was but a distant approach to the Mongol habit of eating but once a week.

We made a long day of it on the steppe Gunshandak, hoping every hour that the Kitai would return. The country was so desert that there was no population, and only two yourts were near us. Our encampment was some distance off the track, and we had consequently no visits from travellers, so we spent a very quiet day. In the afternoon the camels were brought in, and Tellig and the lama examined them all narrowly. Their condition was really becoming serious, for not only were they tired and worn out, but their backs were getting very bad. They are very subject to this. Nearly all of them had large deep holes in their backs, which penetrated almost through the flesh between

the ribs. Maggots breed very fast in these wounds, and every few days the Mongols probe deep into the wound with a bit of stick, and scoop the vermin out. The animals complain a little during this operation, but on the whole they bear their ills with marvellous patience. While the camels are grazing, the crows sit on their backs and feed on the worms. It did seem cruel to put heavy loads on such suffering creatures, but what else could be done?

Our ponies were falling off fast from want of food and rest. It was severe on them to go eighteen hours without eating. But they were, comparatively speaking, a luxury, and could be dispensed with. The camels were essential, and could not be replaced in the desert. The lama betrayed considerable anxiety for his camels, and began to talk of getting fresh ones at a place called *Tsagan-tuguruk*, where there is a *sumé* or temple. We gathered from him that his family lived there, and that he could easily exchange his camels for fresh ones, if only he could reach that rendezvous. But *Tsagan-tuguruk* was four days' journey from us, and our used-up cattle did not look as if they could hold out so long. But we live in hope, for it is foolish to anticipate misfortunes.

We have hitherto met no caravans since leaving China, excepting long trains of ox-carts carrying timber from Urga.

The day wore on and no Kitat appeared. The Mongols strained their eyes to descry some sign on the horizon, then looked anxiously at the sun fast sinking in the west, and made up their minds to remain in the steppe all night. The Mongols have no means of judging of time except by guessing from the height of the sun or moon. I speak only of my own experience, for Hue says they can tell the time of day by looking at a cat's eyes. For my part I did not see a cat in the whole of Mongolia. Dogs they have in plenty. They are of the same breed as the common dog of China, but

rather larger and with thicker coats. They are useful to the shepherds and are good watch dogs, not so thoroughly domestic as their Chinese congeners, but will run after one a great distance from their yurt barking ferociously. They are great curs, however, and their bark is worse than their bite. It is a singular thing that the Mongols do not feed their dogs; nor do the Chinese, as a rule. They are supposed to forage for themselves, and in Mongolia they must be put to great straits occasionally.

The day had been very warm, and, the air being still, in the evening we slept in the carts. It was always warmer and more comfortable to sleep in the tent, but our bedding had to be moved, and the oftener that was done the more sand got into our blankets.

The nights in Mongolia were beautiful, sky very clear, and stars bright. The "harvest moon," that had been such a boon to us in our night travelling, now rose late. In a few days it would be over, and we should have dark nights to travel in.

After a luxurious night's rest, the first we had had for a week, we awoke to see the sun rise on the steppe, and almost fancied ourselves at sea. So indeed we were in a figurative sense, for there was still no appearance of the missing Mongol. We were now in the humour to take things patiently; and the sheep we had killed yesterday enabled us to prepare a breakfast that for a desert night fairly be called sumptuous. The day was passed in idleness, for not a feather of a bird was to be seen to afford an excuse for taking our guns out. Visits were paid and received between us and the Mongols who lived in the two yurts near us, and our lama fraternised with them, and got the women to bring us argols and water. The women, as a rule, keep the house and do the cooking and darning, only going out after the flocks when the men are out of the way.

The lamas carry their principle of not killing animals to an extremity that is sorely inconvenient to themselves. They are not exempt from parasitical connections; in fact, the person of a lama, considered as a microcosm, is remarkably well inhabited. He cannot, with his own hand, "procure the transmigration" of any animal, in case it should contain the soul of his grandfather, or some past or future Bhudda; but when the population presses on the means of subsistence, something must be done. In this juncture the services of some benevolent female are called in, the lama strips to the waist, and commits his person and his garment to her delicate and practised manipulation.

We determined to start at sunset, Kitat or no Kitat, and with one long-lingering look over the vast plain we had crossed, at sunset we did start. We soon met a caravan of sixty camels, which was refreshing to our eyes as evidence of the travelling season having fairly commenced, affording us a better hope of finding fresh camels.

We had again to encounter rough stony roads during the night; in fact, we seemed just to come to the bad roads as we were going to sleep. How was it that we did not sometimes by accident stumble on a bit of soft ground at night-time? The roads were perhaps not so bad as our nocturnal imagination, stimulated by want of proper rest, painted them. But whether or no, we had nothing to complain of on this occasion, having enjoyed a sound unbroken sleep the previous night; and surely one good night out of two is enough for any reasonable being.

In the morning, passing over some rather steeper undulations than usual, and in a very desert country, we came across a herd of guruh. Some ineffectual shots were fired as usual. It was tantalising in the extreme not to be able to bag one of these fine animals when met with in such numbers as would have delighted the heart of Gordon Cumming:



About two o'clock we halted at Kutul-usu, where we were agreeably surprised to find no less than six yourts near our encampment, which was remarkable considering the scarcity of grass. There is no grass at all, in fact, and our beasts return from their grazing redolent of onions. A large ox-cart caravan was also encamped at this place.

Our lama had long and earnest conversations with the Mongols of Kutul-usu, and there was much going to and fro between our tents and the yourts. There was something in the wind—we could not divine what—until the lama again broached the subject of *Tsagan-tuguruk*, the place where he expected new camels. His proposal was that he should ride ahead on a pony, and get the camels ready by the time the caravan came up. There were grave objections to this course, for we were already short-handed from the absence of the Kitat, and were we to be left with only one camel-driver, we should never be able to keep the caravan together. The lama was importunate, and at last we consented to his plan on condition: 1st, that he should find a substitute to assist Tellig with the caravan; and 2nd, that he should provide us with fresh ponies at *Tsagan-tuguruk*. The substitute was soon found in an active-looking, wiry old man with very bad eyes. The sun had set some time before the discussions and preparations were concluded, and we were consequently compelled to remain till the moon rose, which was not before eleven o'clock—half the night gone and no progress made.

We had a rough night as usual, but we are getting into a more broken country. In the morning we passed one of the numerous salt plains that are spread over the great desert. Sometimes there is water in them and sometimes not. This one was dry, but had a white scurf of salt on the ground. A dark-green plant grows in tufts over these plains, and is eaten by the animals in the absence of grass; indeed, I am not sure

whether the camels don't prefer it. It was a hot thirsty day, and we were at great trouble to find a yourt in which to rest and make chocolate in the morning. We did discover one eventually after riding many miles, and there we fell in with a sporting lama with two good-looking ponies, riding one and leading the other. This seemed a good opportunity for business, and my companion soon concluded an exchange operation, giving a pony with an incipient sore back and two dollars to boot, for a good old sound one of the lama's. We were in some doubt about finding our caravan, having let it get a long way out of sight ; but the wandering lama, having a direct interest in discovering our party to get his two dollars, soon scented them out by the same kind of instinct that directs a bee to his distant hive. We took him some miles back out of his way, but these people seem to care little in which direction they go, or how much time they may lose in going from one place to another.

The facility with which our Mongol friends found their way in the open desert had often excited our admiration. At the end of a night's march, although interrupted by numerous accidental stoppages, they were never at a loss to know where they were. They needed no land-mark to guide them, and in pitching their tent near a well they never made a mistake as to its position. The explanation seems to be that certain instincts are developed in proportion to the want of artificial aids. Thus Chinese sailors cruise about their dangerous coast by a kind of rule of thumb, and are able to judge of their position in darkness and fog where scientific navigators would be at fault. In Australia also it is found that the best bush-ranger is generally the most ignorant man of the party. The effect of education being to cause men to trust more and more to acquired knowledge, the faculty of perception, which is possessed in a high degree by the lower animals, becomes weakened for want of exercise. Instinct and education mu-